

#7

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DIALOG(R) File 275:Gale Group Computer DB(TM)
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01628098 SUPPLIER NUMBER: 14770217 (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)
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Edwards, Stephen E.; Neeff, David; Tribute, Andrew
Seybold Report on Publishing Systems, v23, n6, p3(37)
Nov 8, 1993

ISSN: 0736-7260 LANGUAGE: ENGLISH RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT
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TEXT:

At the last IFRA show, we noted that this was an industry with few buyers. This year, the situation appeared to have changed, at least marginally. While there weren't many orders placed, there was substantial interest. Many companies, as is the practice in Europe, brought several staff members to perform detailed evaluations of selected systems. Thus, it appears that things are looking up. Perhaps the best description of the situation might be the comment of Martin Dann of QED, who said, "This is an industry riding the crest of a slump."

It is always interesting to compare Nexpo with IFRA, where we see not only a different range of suppliers, but also different strategies for buying. For example, German newspapers largely leave purchases to chief executives and technical managers, giving editorial and advertising staff little say regarding the systems they use. This approach may explain why Germany is the one area in the world where mainframe systems from IBM and Siemens products are still being sold, installed and maintained at newspapers.

At the opposite end of the spectrum are the Scandinavians, who involve all departments in the buying process. Unlike the U.S., however, European newspapers ideally are still looking for a single-supplier solution that will also handle the commercial aspects of the newspaper.

This concept was evident in one of the major trends at the exhibition -- a single database from which all elements of the newspaper are controlled. Key suppliers showing this kind of database were DDE, P.Ink and Sypress. The DDE and Sypress systems, for example, with their excellent production and tracking modules, illustrated the real benefits of having one central repository for all data. These two companies surprised us most with the completeness of their offerings.

In other areas, we saw a move, as in North America, toward an increasing use of standard application software. However, Europe hasn't yet demonstrated the lemming-like charge to pagination using Quark Xpress that has gripped the U.S. In Europe, pagination offerings in many cases do use Xpress, but there are many other companies with impressive, non-Xpress approaches. Examples at IFRA included CCI, Cybervision, DDE, Hyphen, Mediasystemen and Unisys, but there were many others.

For workstations, there was an increased use of pcs running Windows, which showed that newspaper and commercial applications in Europe do not necessarily go hand in hand. A few weeks ago at IPEX, we had to hunt hard for Windows applications. At IFRA, however, there were almost as many applications using Xpress for Windows as there were using the Mac version.

An important development in the Xpress pagination area came from Atex, with a multiuser pagination Xtension that it plans to offer in the open Xtension marketplace.

Other highlights at the show included the arrival of Cybervision as a total system supplier, rather than just handling display advertising. Wilkenson, with its Scoop system, showed that newspaper editorial systems can be considered a shrink-wrapped market.

Among companies we hadn't seen before, Proenen and Partner impressed us the most with its editorial system, which is sold through Atex's German subsidiary. For a system that Atex tells us is targeted at small newspapers, it may be very attractive to many large newspapers as well.

Digital imaging. We were struck by how many vendors are now in the digital imaging business, some with portable transmitters, others with image archiving systems and, of course, many with picture desks. The competition for the lightweight transmitters for reporters in the field is heating up as vendors figure out the best way to use a Nikon Coolscan scanner.

Digital Collections of Germany showed an impressive system for archiving and retrieval of text and images, with a link to Quark Xpress that is already in production use at a German newspaper.

Output devices and fax systems. There wasn't a lot new in the area of output devices, although Information International, Monotype and Orbotech showed system enhancements aimed at newspapers. Most other vendors brought

the same systems they had shown at IPEX.

In the fax arena, Eskofot demonstrated some enhancements to its system and Tecsa showed how facsimile scanning can still be a profitable market, especially if it's linked to the distribution of display advertising among remote sites.

Editorial and Classified Systems

The parade of systems exhibited at IFRA is one of the reasons we look forward to this annual show. The main reason, we guess, is that it provides an opportunity to see some systems that we can't see anywhere else. These products don't appear at Newstec or the annual Seybold European publishing event, and they never make it across the ocean for ANPA/Nexpo. So, although these systems aren't major factors in the world market, they embellish our coverage once a year when we focus on IFRA and the European newspaper market.

In other respects, IFRA sometimes seems more like an echo of the June show in the U.S., since some of the major companies haven't had a chance to add key developments to what they showed four months ago at Nexpo.

Alfa installs first standard system

Alfa System Partner of Germany continues its transition from the Prime Computer platform to standard systems with a product line called Alfa News II/DBS. It successfully installed one editorial system earlier this year, and it plans to install a second by the end of the year.

Advertising is planned for early next year, with a business system to follow shortly thereafter. Most of the applications are based on its own software, ported from Prime to os/2. The system uses a Sybase database Alfa licenses from Chelgraph, called Mosaic. It includes opi software.

Atex forges ahead

At Nexpo, Atex unveiled some products that nearly revolutionized its whole product line. The main ones were the Deadline editorial system, the Enterprise advertising system, the Reflex production workflow tracking tool and the Press2Go pagination system based on Quark Xpress. IFRA gave us a chance to see how these products are developing and how close they are to reaching the marketplace.

Deadline is a client/server system that uses IBM RS/6000 servers running Sybase. A version with pc clients running under os/2 is going into beta testing at the Orange County (CA) Register, where a 50-seat pilot system has been installed. In November, another 50-seat pilot system will be installed at the New York Daily News to handle features. This is scheduled to be a 275-seat system by mid-1994.

New developments within Deadline include macros in XyWrite for Windows (operating as a Windows session under os/2) to generate styles and widths for Press2Go editorial pagination. There is also a style writer utility for setting up formats to work with the WES composition system. This will include break codes for moving from one element of a style to another, such as changing from a headline to an introduction with one keystroke.

Another feature under development is a multithreaded approach using os/2 to perform paragraph-by-paragraph, background composition with the WES composition system.

One of our main criticisms of Deadline when we saw it at Nexpo was the lack of a good database search facility. Searches are based on predefined arguments, and there is no way to create previously undefined wildcard searches. This is still the case, but Atex plans to add this functionality later.

Enterprise. The Enterprise ad system has undergone some changes based on criticisms that surfaced at Nexpo. It is now possible to modify the ad booking form dialog via Visual Basic code. Workflow enhancements allow delayed routing of ads for credit checking, training, etc. There is also a version enhancement that tracks ad changes and enables retrieving an earlier version of an ad.

A new transaction history file details all changes made during the life of an ad. Another facility allows you to add a different close time to each defined classification. Enterprise has entered beta testing at the New Zealand Herald in Wellington and at Il Gazatino in Rome. The scheduled

release date is early in 1994.

Press2Go. The Press2Go editorial pagination system, built around Quark Xpress on the Mac, has been given Locales -- status indicators based on copyflow. As work moves through this copyflow, the Locales are updated. These Locales will be accessed by the Reflex production tracking system.

The main development, however, was the move to make Press2Go with Xpress a multiuser pagination system. The interesting thing about this is that Atex plans to offer this as a Quark Xtension to any Xpress user. It will work with either standard AppleShare or with an sql database. When implemented with Deadline, the facility can allocate page elements defined in Xpress to specific desks. Stories are defined as raw, in progress or finished.

In the multiuser Press2Go, assignments to copy editors are made in the sql database. The layout is then split into separate Xpress pages showing all the defined elements but only allowing the allocated element to be opened. An alternative view shows just the allocated story, leaving out the rest of the page elements. This allows a number of copy editors to work concurrently on the page. What this version of Press2Go lacks is a facility to monitor all the defined elements and to output the page automatically when the elements are completed. This module is still under development and should be available by the start of 1994. The pricing, and packaging for it to be sold in the open market for Quark Xpress is still undefined.

Press2Go also features a new Xtension called Smart Shapes. At ANPA in 1992, Atex showed Renaissance, a Mac-based pagination system integrated with the Kodak Prophecy color system. One feature we liked very much was a Smart Shapes utility, which allowed a library of predefined article shapes to be stored. When one of these shapes was put on a page, it could be stretched across columns or to a greater depth without enlarging the space for gutters or between elements. Now, this same capability is available in Press2Go.

Other Press2Go Xtensions include Jump Documents, which allows text to flow from one document into another; Atex Headers, to create Atex headers in the J11 system; and Oops, which removes hard line endings.

CCI completes editorial system

Since our in-depth coverage of CCI last year, the company has been engaged in transforming itself from a supplier primarily of newspaper pagination and graphics systems to a supplier of complete editorial systems. At Nexpo, where the system was shown in preliminary form, it drew perhaps the largest crowds of any display there. At IFRA, the complete system was demonstrated.

Without doubt, CCI has one of the most comprehensive editorial systems we have seen. It is based entirely on Unix and X Window, but it allows the inclusion of standard applications such as Microsoft Word. In speed of operation, there is probably nothing in the industry as fast as the CCI application.

CCI is one of several European suppliers using a database-driven approach to newspaper publishing. Although it is the European market leader in large-scale newspaper systems, it has a limited presence in medium- and small-size newspapers.

It is working with about seven major newspapers to install its page production system, including its new editorial database. It is also taking many orders from traditional, large-scale newspaper system suppliers. We believe that SII's recent decision to attempt to restructure its debt while under the protection of Chapter 11 may persuade some of its European customers or prospective customers to open detailed negotiations with CCI.

In a forthcoming article, we will look at all aspects of its recent developments, including its moves into the North American market, where so far it has only worked in the display ad management area.

Cicero moves into tracking

With more than 30 systems in full production in Central Europe, Cicero has started to move in a new direction -- tracking, control and overall production management issues. The scope of this process includes everything from planning next week's editions to getting the correct plates on the press for today's paper.

Cicero gave a quick preview of three Windows-based client applications that will form the basis of this product. The first is an edition planning module for optimizing ways of manufacturing the edition. This planning software will have access to a live ad database for accurate sizing.

A second client application uses bar codes to monitor the flow of materials -- both electronic and physical. This will include tracking every page to the final stage of getting the plates to the proper cylinder on the press.

A third module will handle the human interaction of controlling and visually monitoring production against deadlines.

ComIt/Comtec presses on

[For readers who may be confused about the various historic roles of Norsk Data, ND Comtec, ComIt and Comtec GmbH in this market, we might begin with a review of some key recent developments. ComIt was founded in March 1991 by people from ND Comtec's former development department. It then purchased the rights to all ND Comtec products from Norsk Data, along with the customer base in Scandinavia and central Europe, totaling about 350 installations. (The funding for the acquisition was guaranteed by DEC.) After establishing distribution channels in Scandinavia, the next step, which took place last summer, was to acquire Comtec GmbH, the German subsidiary of ND Comtec, which has a presence in Germany, Austria, Holland and Switzerland.]

ComIt, the development company behind the ComPress product line, went into receivership the week before IFRA. Like most companies going into receivership, ComIt expects to come out very soon with new investors and fresh coffers full of money. Hopefully, our fax machine will buzz with news of this very soon. Unfortunately, we have heard this too many times before.

The receivership action did not affect Comtec.

IFRA served to demonstrate the progress made in building the ComPress editorial product using a standard sql database for storing text, graphics and ads. Standard applications should be used on the clients wherever the functionality and user interface are good enough, such as Word and Quark Xpress. Workbench is the name for the software that integrates Windows, Unix and Mac applications to the database on the server. In this way, all page elements are managed using the database facilities that also control the production flow.

The effort until now mainly has focused on getting the functionality in place, but now ComIt will focus more on the user interface. Directories and layout functions are still in character formats, which don't exploit Windows like other similar attempts. However, we expect this to change soon.

For more news on ComIt, see our Latest Word section.

Cybervision's small wonder

Cybervision, a small UK developer whose members came from Xenotron, is best known for its excellent pc-based display ad workstation. Many of its customers previously used Xenotron systems. Following the success of its display ad product, Cybervision built a database, called Cyclops, to handle ad management. Based on Novell Btrieve, it is used at certain Xenotron sites to provide links into other systems. At the Express and Star in Wolverhampton, England, Cybervision is adding a rip function for Xenotron ads, which moves these ads into a database for placement on pages that will be output in PostScript.

At IFRA, we found that the Cyclops system had blossomed into a full, publication management system with the addition of editorial, classified and pagination functionality. These systems, built using Visual Basic, can access any database supported by that software.

The new editorial system is priced very reasonably, works completely under Windows and features full layout-driven pagination with interactive wysiwyg text editing. This is accomplished with a page planning system, which displays full wysiwyg elements when they are made up.

The first stage involves building the page plan. All page elements are linked to the Cyclops database with styles. The article is then written using the text editor, where writing to fit is required. The layout is taken into the interactive composition and editing module, which uses

Serif's PagePlus software. (Serif also dates back to Xenotron.) Here, only the geometry for the specified article is shown, and the copy editor writes the text to fit the space. The links to PagePlus allow for exact geometry transfer, and the connection also takes the exact makeup into the Cyclops page assembly module where the page is reviewed.

The page tracking system follows every item through the database. Up to eight pages can be viewed at one time, where the status of page elements is color coded. A user can immediately switch to a wysiwyg view of the page in a single operation.

The same facilities are used for tracking all stories -- as well as display ads -- by basket and origin. Tracking can be based on classification, status, customer, size, etc. Selecting an ad displays it. Images and page output status can also be tracked.

The classified pagination portion of Cyclops holds every ad for display as a rasterized element. This function employs GoScript software to build wysiwyg viewfiles of each ad. Ads are then flowed into pages according to flow algorithms. Ads from other systems are trickled into the Cyclops database and simultaneously rasterized to viewfiles for placement. The flowing algorithms allow for classification selection. Ads once placed can be reflowed and moved.

Within the advertising booking system, a direct link to a simple display ad makeup module allows ads to be made up rapidly by the ad taker. This ad makeup system is a reduced-function version of a new display ad makeup system for Windows due out early next year.

Overall, we'd call Cyclops the most surprising system at IFRA. The amount of development done by such a small group was truly impressive. Cyclops appeared to be a very attractive, low-cost, but very complete and comprehensive system. Pricing hasn't been finalized, but the server license, minus any database license, is likely to be around \$5,000, and each editorial workstation linked to it, with full composition and interactive wysiwyg, should be around \$500. These prices do not include hardware costs.

DDE: integration, not standards

DDE Euromax proved to be yet another surprise with the level of functionality and integration it had achieved since we last saw it. DDE demonstrated one of the most comprehensive integrated newspaper solutions we have seen. The level of integration was one of the reasons that Belgian newspaper publisher VUM decided to order a DDK 30 million (\$4.4 million) DDE system to produce 100-200 pages a day at its three daily papers.

Running on the DDE multiprocessor Unix platform, the system works in a full client/server mode based on Oracle database software. All clients run in the X Window environment.

The system isn't built around any standard application packages, which goes against all the trends in the industry, but what we saw looked complete and tightly integrated.

The system is built around a common database. The editorial system utilizes the News Menu and Editorial Agenda modules. News Menu, which enables central control of the production process, provides an overview of the newspaper's status, governs the data flow and controls each element of the newspaper. It also links articles and pictures to the Editorial Agenda. All articles have a set of information items associated with them, which are updated as workflow progresses.

Editorial Agenda -- the editorial planning tool -- allows for setup and maintenance of the story budget.

Pagination is predominantly layout driven using DDE's own page planning system. It works in the traditional fashion of design-based systems, but it also provides a full wysiwyg preview. The copy editor can use the editing terminal with the wysiwyg preview to write articles to fit the defined space. What impressed us was the tremendous speed of composition and display on the X-terminal. One present limitation is the lack of cursor tracking between the wysiwyg display and the text editor.

In perspective. From every angle, this is a well-integrated system. Ad booking is comprehensive and flexible. It is linked nicely with DDE's own display ad and classified pagination systems. These modules, plus the

editorial system, link to the overall production tracking and control system used to control the production of pages according to deadlines. For each page, a deadline is specified for every step of the production process. This deadline can be read by the system or via a bar code, which reports the time pages were produced from the system, imprinted on completed film.

From what we saw, Euromax is one of the most comprehensive systems in the industry. Based on a client/server database model, it provides very strong overall planning and tracking.

One limitation is its use of the DDE multiprocessor Unix computer system. By today's standards, DDE is a very small computer company, so certain organizations may be reticent about placing their futures in its hands. The Euromax software team recognizes this as a possible problem and has discussed porting the system to the Sun Sparc platform. However, DDE feels that the performance and functionality wouldn't be as good as it is with the DDE computer.

DEC focuses on integrator role

In its booth, Digital Equipment showed a range of systems from vendors it supports, including Dewar and Trurofield. DEC's products were on display also in a number of other booths, such as Expograph's and Hyphen's. But DEC mainly emphasized its efforts to be the lead supplier in cases where it was the integrator and prime contractor.

DuPont adds Paragon to Whirlwind

Besides its news on the output front (see our last issue), DuPont showed its Whirlwind editorial and classified systems with a few enhancements. Some of them -- such as support for Windows and Macintosh workstations with a Sun server -- were shown at Nexpo last June.

Minor enhancements since then include a quick query feature that uses single-key macros to access forms for performing various functions. These forms can be set up for individual, group or system use. These forms have editable fields.

DuPont also continued to work on system management functions, such as improving facilities for purging data by basing it on the last date a story was revised, rather than the creation date.

ProType pagination. However, the biggest news is probably that an interface is being developed to enable Whirlwind to use the Paragon Publishing Systems (formerly Bedford Computer) ProType pagination software. At the Seybold Seminars show last April, Paragon had announced that it was working on such a pagination product. By IFRA, it was close enough to being ready for DuPont to demonstrate it, although initial deliveries won't take place until the second quarter of 1994.

The goal is a tight linkage between Whirlwind and ProType that enables Whirlwind to see ProType pages. The Whirlwind user will be able to double-click on a page to open ProType. Editing changes made while in ProType will be reflected in the Whirlwind database.

Similarly, while in ProType, the operator will be able to access Whirlwind menus to import Whirlwind text, to export text, close pages, etc.

There will be two ways to flow Whirlwind text into ProType. First, if the layout has already been specified in ProType, the Whirlwind operator will be able to flow the text into the page geometry using format calls to set up heads, body text, and so on.

Alternatively, formats specified in Whirlwind will be converted into layout modules that appear on ProType pages and can be moved into their correct positions.

DuPont is adding the ability for ProType to output the SPDL commands that are the native format for Whirlwind.

Other pagination efforts. The deal with Paragon doesn't mean that DuPont won't continue to pursue other pagination efforts. In fact, there is serious activity on several other fronts.

First, DuPont continues to work on its own pagination program, which has been a long time in the making, but which may be getting close enough to fruition for the company to elaborate further on its plans at Nexpo in June.

Second, an interface to Computerease's Page Control/Ad Layout software

is under development.

Third, the Desktop Connect and Quark Connect modules discussed previously are scheduled for formal introductions in the first quarter. Desktop Connect enables Macintosh and Windows software to be transferred to Whirlwind. Quark Connect, which sits on top of Desktop Connect, is an Xpress Xtension that enables an Xpress user to pull text directly from Whirlwind onto an Xpress page.

The Xtension supports saving and retrieving Whirlwind text while within Xpress, plus tracking the status of jobs by asking the operator to fill in a dialog box. It also enables elements created in Xpress to be used within Whirlwind. As the product now stands, text is h&j'ed by the program it is in, which means that it will change when it moves from one to the other. DuPont would like to give the user the choice of preserving the line breaks that were set up initially, regardless of which program that was.

Meanwhile, in Houston, home of the company's lead user (the Chronicle), pagination is handled by making up modules and pasting them on the page. Multiple users work on the same page concurrently by composing separate modules.

ESE works on sheer speed

At Editorial Systems Engineering, we saw yet another "glue" product. Information Engineering's Editorial News Layout, which years ago was one of the first pc products for news layout, was demonstrated in conjunction with Word, an sql database, Btrieve and Quark Xpress. To distinguish their products, vendors seem to be concentrating on three areas: exploiting Windows features (enhancing the application for editorial functions such as directories and e-mail), handling jump pages smoothly with all of the associated background file management, and dealing with the now infamous "fiddle factor."

ESE's philosophy, motivated by sheer speed, uses a "front-to-back" approach. Citing its experience in Wapping, ESE says less than two percent of all newspaper pages require modifications at the final Quark Xpress stage. Based on this assumption, it preserves the Word composition in Xpress using an Xtension. If for some reason text needs to be edited at the Xpress stage, then Xpress composition takes over. However, as everyone knows by now, there is a sticky problem of updating the original story back in Word. ESE is still working on smoothing the edges on this task. It is handling jumps using a Windows multidocument interface, opening as many Quark documents as it needs at one time.

We have discussed the functionality of Editorial News Layout before; however, it is changing on the user interface level, moving from a character-based interface to a menu one and now to Windows - - which for other suppliers often has turned out to be a strain on resources. While there has been progress at ESE, it doesn't show the maturity at the user-interface level that other front-end suppliers offer, such as Dewar with its DewarView.

Expograph introduces XPAS

Expograph, a small Dutch supplier that may have been the first of the current system integrators, is a model for many other companies. It is notable in its ability to adapt to the changing needs of the market and its customers. The company works in the Benelux countries and employs 35 people, a third of whom are in development with a similar number in customer support. Turnover is around Gld 10 million (about \$5.3 million).

The company works very closely with Digital Equipment and has perhaps the closest relationship with DEC of any European system supplier. For many years Expograph has offered its own editorial system using pcs linked into Digital's vms servers. These systems are still being offered and installed. Expograph links its editorial system to a number of pagination products, including Digital Technology's PageSpeed, for which it is the Benelux distributor.

Expograph also sells advertising systems using DT's AdSpeed. It will offer, if required, the full Digital Technology editorial and advertising lines. So far, though, it has found its own approach, which uses Vax hardware under vms and the rdb database, more suited to its markets. The systems it offers use many standard packages, including text editors, but

as a system integrator, it will provide whatever it and the client determine to be most suitable for the situation.

XPAS. At IFRA, Expograph introduced its XPAS ad page production system, developed in association with Digital Equipment. It uses Expograph's own and other standard software modules, covering ad page production, ad entry, classified ad processing, ad layout and ad page layout. This last module is based on Quark Xpress, while others use DT software.

XPAS handles production control using a standard DEC relational database over the total ad flow, from order entry through page production. It manages and stores all ad data and provides information to authorized users. It is based on a management layer that operates and integrates different applications. It provides users with the required functionality and data and monitors the progress of the tasks to be performed. When a task is completed, the output is checked and automatically routed to the next stage in the process. XPAS is based on a client/server model that allows organizations to implement it step by step.

Funkinform needs to open windows

There wasn't much particularly new at Funkinform, but we watched a short demonstration of its proprietary, editorially driven pagination system. We expect that an impending move to Windows next year will provide an opportunity to make the product faster and easier to use -- to say nothing about being more attractive. The move should be a boon, no matter whether it is judged on beauty, convenience or merely speed. We'll be very interested to see this product next year.

Harris reorganizes in Europe

Harris used IFRA to announce the reorganization of its representation in central Europe. WIFAC, a division of Swiss WIFAG, will expand its distribution agreement to include Germany and Austria, in addition to Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium. CompuSys GmbH, which has been supporting Harris equipment in Germany for the past 15 years, will refocus on strictly maintenance support of Harris systems.

Eventually, CompuSys may expand its coverage to include the Benelux region and Scandinavian countries. WIFAC, a successful integrator for Harris, Autologic and Crosfield equipment, will focus its attention on dedicated on-site project management and integration support of prepress systems.

Other Harris distributors -- Graphicart in Switzerland, Silfo S.r.l. in Italy and Scandinavian Publishing Systems, AB, in Scandinavia -- are not affected by these announcements.

Hyphen hooks up with Dewar

At IPEX, Hyphen's major announcement focused on its move to a new rip architecture (see Vol. 23, No. 4, p. 25). At IFRA, the main news concerned announcements for the future, which we will look at in more detail when they have been implemented.

The key one was an agreement with Dewar Information Systems to incorporate both the DewarView document object manager and the Dewar classified system into the Hyphen newspaper system. DewarView will be used to enhance the user interface on the Hyphen Editorial System (previously called Options), which, as we pointed out at Nexpo, is one of the system's limitations, as is directory processing.

The Dewar classified system will make Hyphen's newspaper publishing offerings more complete. Previously, Hyphen had no ad package. The new system will further develop the Windows version of the Dewar product. We'll wait to look at this under Windows before commenting further. Beta testing is planned for early in 1994.

Another development in the whole newspaper system market is to offer a common database implementation. Hyphen offers an excellent system for production tracking, called PTS, which uses Sybase on Sparcstation hardware. The Hyphen Editorial System, however, doesn't use a standard database, so Hyphen plans to link it to the PTS Sybase database via the DewarView user interface. This should then provide a total Windows gui for all elements of the Hyphen system from editorial and advertising to pagination and tracking operations.

Linotype-Hell links LinoPress, LinoServer

Linotype-Hell featured its LinoPress newspaper publishing system, which now has 40 customers (34 already installed) from ten different countries. Of these customers, seven ordered the advertising system, while three currently have it installed.

A new development for the LinoPress is its ability to run on the LinoServer, as used in the Linotype-Hell color product line. LinoServer runs on the Data General Aviiion Unix computer range. Previously, the LinoPress server, which uses Sybase, only ran on Sparcstation hardware. In the Data General configuration, Sybase operates for LinoPress, and Helios Ethershare operates for both LinoPress and LinoServer applications.

Other developments for LinoPress pagination allow eps files to be placed on a page and linked to the ad system with an ad header and pricing information. Rgb files can be color separated on output as well as on input. At Nexpo, we looked at the agreement with DPS Typecraft to incorporate its PlanBuilder ad dummyming and classified pagination product into LinoPress. This is now implemented, and the page plans can be taken into the LinoPress pagination.

Mactive active with AdBase

To create a vision of Mactive's AdBase advertising system, try to imagine the feature set of an Atex or SII advertising system, combined with an Information International or Camex ad production system and a Neasi-Weber or Collier-Jackson business system all running under an sql database. That's Mactive. While other vendors are expending most of their resources porting application code from one platform to the next, AdBase simply keeps on progressing and impressing.

By starting with a client/server database many years ago and focusing on advertising, Mactive has shown what can be accomplished. The latest accomplishment-in-progress is a Windows version of AdBase that will be installed by January. Hopefully during next year, it will be able to handle any platform and any database model. Most current customers are based on the Macintosh/Vax platform. Windows will make Mactive formidable competition for years to come, but it may need to alter its name.

Because Mactive doesn't plan its development cycles around shows like IFRA (that could be another secret to its success), we will highlight a few modules that haven't been covered before, even if they aren't new.

Database focus. Mactive's approach is to provide as many planning tools as are necessary to maximize the efficiency of operations. The system provides no shortage of statistics to aid in this respect, enabled in part because all operations take place on the same database. Mactive generates reports on sales, accounting, management and production analysis, which heads off problems and improves efficiency. The database features for the system are complete, but the user interface is still under development.

AdWatch tracks and controls advertising from a sales and a production point of view. It is accomplished using Xpress and Creator as ad makeup tools. (And we had thought statistics on ad production had gone the way of proprietary ad systems.)

AdLink prepares work for either Xpress or Creator. With a matching Xtension, this module can perform more functions with Xpress than with Creator, but Mactive continues to have discussions with Multi-Ad Services aimed at increasing the closeness of their relationship. AdLink operates more in the background, creating templates for Xpress and handling file locking for ad production.

AutoClass, the speedy pagination routine, has an impressive success story to tell. Its installation at the London Evening Standard has reduced classified makeup from seven positions to one, but, even more importantly, it has saved an average of 1.5 pages per day. Obviously, this development has more significant implications for the longer term. As always, the key is the raw speed of pagination. At one second per page, an operator can afford to make as many passes as it takes to reduce "air" and create the most efficient classified section.

The purpose of a first pass is as a trial to see how efficiently the algorithm creates the section. Statistical data indicate the percentage of white space in the section. An operator can then manually move around

display ads, whole classifications or whatever makes sense, and then retry paginating the section.

When the operator is content with the "air" ratio, the last pass automatically inserts filler ads and vertically justifies the columns automatically. We watched a 12-page section flow three times at ten seconds per pass. It's hard to imagine many weekday sections taking longer than a half hour to paginate each day.

M*lardata enhances editorial features

M*lardata, which we last saw in the winter at the Graphex Prepress '93 show in Sweden (see Vol. 22, No. 12, pp. 29-30), has added some nice conveniences to its MPress 2000 editorial system for Unix servers and Macintosh or pc workstations. It now offers a choice of editing programs, including the company's own and XyWrite, plus interfaces to Wilkenson Scoop and Baseview. Text is sent to another program via a menu.

An addition to the M*lardata editor is an estimated depth count based on the number of characters in the file and the format in effect.

The directory now provides access to extra information about each file, such as who used it most recently. New for the directory of wire service stories is a preview of story text. The directory can be sorted based on the writer, date of entry, size, etc.

To aid fitting headlines, the system now offers a feature for scaling headlines to fill the column width exactly.

With all editing programs, the system now saves all versions of files. Also new is a report of article history (see photo). The history indicates who used the article, its priority, its status, whether or not it has a photo and its size, which will be exact if the story has been placed on a page.

Pagination. For pagination, M*lardata has developed an Xtension for ad dummymyng, including the capability to handle multiple editions.

Another pagination aid facilitates basic editing in a window, rather than on the page. The user selects a block of text with the cursor and brings it up in the window. Functionality is limited to basic items such as cutting and pasting, but if that is sufficient, the operation can be faster than working in Xpress.

When a page has been completely made up, the user can change its status and cause it to move automatically to its next stage -- typesetting, opi processing, etc.

Editorial planning. M*lardata showed a beta version of a planning program that tracks items such as staff members' activities, addresses, schedules, and so on. More to the needs of editorial operations is the ability to track assignments for a future edition of the paper. When an assignment is finished, the reporter can indicate its completed status manually.

Mediasystemen heads south

Mediasystemen has expanded into new areas, moving successfully into the South African market, where it established deals with two of the three major newspaper publishing groups.

Meanwhile, its product line continues to impress us. This small Dutch system vendor has been one of the first companies to implement many of the technologies most companies are using today. For example, it was the first company we found using object-oriented programming. In fact, Mediasystemen was such an early user of this technology that it had to develop its own object-oriented programming language, CO2..At IFRA, we saw ongoing improvements with all systems.

Its PC-based Memphis page makeup system has always been one of the fastest newspaper pagination systems in the industry, with facilities specifically built for making up news pages. Until now, one weakness has been the lack of a good layout-driven pagination mode. But not anymore. This system can now mix both copy-driven and layout-driven pagination on the same page.

Layout works the same way as in other systems in planning text boxes and attaching style templates to them. Text boxes can be built with irregularly shaped runarounds. To use layout mode, text boxes are named or the shape is attached to a predefined story or copy header. Geometry for an

article can be locked or movable.

To write copy to fit a shape, the Qwerty text editor of the Uniq editorial system is used. The header shows full information about each block, while composition shows the full makeup of the text, including column breaks. When completed, the article is automatically pulled into the page when Memphis opens it.

The AdLine ad booking system, which uses the Sybase database with pc clients, is extremely flexible because of its use of the SmallTalk language in the workstation. Now operating under Windows, it allows future seamless links with other Windows products using Mediasystemen's OMAR object management links to the database.

The new MediaGlue product assists in the makeup of display ads using standard Windows-based ad makeup packages. It also takes the ad booking data from the database and copies it to a user's local disk where a Windows ad makeup package will work with the data from the ad system to make up the display ad. When completed, the ad will automatically be saved and remain linked to the database.

South Africa. The new market for Mediasystemen is South Africa, one of the most sophisticated in the world. At one time it was Atex's best market outside the U.S. When Atex pulled out of South Africa under Kodak's orders in the mid-1980s, the three major newspaper groups, which all had a large number of Atex installations, were left on their own. Through their own expertise, some have kept these Atex systems operating, while others have carried on their own developments.

Mediasystemen is now installing its first system at Pretoria News, a member of the Argus Group, totally replacing an existing Atex system. This will handle the paper's full editorial and advertising requirements, while adding pagination with graphics. The system has 56 editorial workstations; two editorial, two graphics and two ad servers; and 35 advertising workstations, including those for display ad makeup. In addition, there are seven pagination workstations.

Argus is viewing this as a pilot site to test the system and assess the feasibility for use at its larger newspapers in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban.

Nationale Pers, the Afrikaans newspaper publisher, has been evaluating Mediasystemen for almost a year. It had developed its own editorial and ad systems to replace its Atex systems. Now it has an 18-month development plan to convert to Mediasystemen in a joint development. Initially, it has signed site licenses for system modules to be built into its own systems.

Microservice shows editorial system

Microservice Informatique of France, in its first appearance at a newspaper show, demonstrated an editorial system based on standard components, primarily the 4th Dimension database, Macintosh workstations and Quark Xpress for pagination. The system is based on a workflow in which a writer writes a story and sends it to an editor to edit prior to sending it to page layout. A variety of text editors can be used, but they don't have much of a link to Xpress. If users want to write to fit, they have to talk to the layout editor and estimate copy depth within the word processor.

The system provides some nice facilities for formatting text, although it doesn't actually h&j the text until it reaches Xpress. The operator specifies the number of columns and size of a picture, if there is one, and the system responds with the formats available for that specification. That information is sent with the file for use in Xpress. The system prevents sending stories without required information, such as those that are missing headlines when the format calls for a headline.

After a file is sent to Xpress -- done by dropping an icon on a layout area -- there is no way for the writer to know how it fits, aside from looking at the page. In general, the editor and layout personnel work together to try to make copy fit on the page. Part of the reason for this procedure is union restrictions on workers doing more than one job. If the fit is close, the easiest way to fix it is to adjust the leading, rather than to edit the story, Microservice said.

Stories are sent to specific pages in Xpress. A directory lists the

stories used on each page (see photo on previous page).

Microservice is working on ad reservation software.

Multicom shifts to NT

Multicom, a small German vendor we have watched with respect, has moved its systems from the Atari platform to pcs under Windows. The server can now also run under the nt operating system on a DEC Alpha computer, which allows the system to operate over a wide-area network via a select routing mask.

The system looks impressive on the Windows platform.

Multicom has made a number of installations, the most recent of which was to one of the major Atex German customers, WAZ, which will replace its existing Atex system. The WAZ system will have around 250 pc workstations linked into DEC Alpha servers. It will handle both layout and interactive pagination.

ND Comtec deals with reality

It is not as much fun when the business issues are the focus over technical achievements; however, the predominant message at the ND Comtec booth was that it was a completely different company from the Comtec/ComIt that had gone into receivership the week before. Even though it has a rich history, it is sufficient to say that ND Comtec is part of a separate company, Norsk Data (UK), that derives most of its revenue from support and maintenance contracts, both third- and fourth-party. To emphasize this point, we will probably see the Comtec part of the name shrink to oblivion in the near future.

On the technical side, ND Comtec is now a QPS integrator with the experience to combine many familiar and new technologies to form a workable system. It has developed a particular spin on advertising that we hope to hear more about soon.

P.Ink supports distribution, MIS

At the last IFRA show, P.Ink previewed the software modules needed to complete its publishing system. These covered a brand-new ad booking system, page planning, classified pagination, and various administration modules. This year, these were shown in completed or nearly completed form and the new items delved into different areas (see below).

In checking the progress of last year's introductions, we found the ad booking system to be excellent, but it still has a way to go before reaching a form flexible enough for its first installation early in 1994.

The classified pagination system also looks very good and works together with Quark Xpress. It first processes all the ad elements, working out their exact x and y coordinates. It then uses Xpress to display the completed page, including any graphics. It works with the page planning program to link with the planned rop advertising software.

New modules. This year, three new modules were introduced to complete the P.Ink system: one for distribution and delivery, one for mis, and a new navigator module. Navigator is a tool for maintaining large networks, handling administrative tasks and navigating the user through P.Ink applications. It provides a consistent user interface across all modules. It also sets up access privileges and makes it easy for a newcomer to maneuver around all applications. Another benefit is that it makes updating software across the network much easier and faster.

The distribution and delivery system handles newspaper and magazine distribution activities, including subscription management, brochure and supplement distribution, delivery trip planning, wholesale and retail sales, district and regional management, shipping, billing and statistics. The module is accessible over the network.

The distribution system, scheduled to be available next summer, will interface to the Ad Management module and link with a common database of information containing customers, orders and address data.

The new Management Information System module presents all data in the database as lists, graphs and tables. This module uses the P.Ink sql 2.0 database (around which all P.Ink applications are written), a report generator and the MacControl program from Breitschwerdt and Partner -- a graphics and table-oriented program that retrieves any information from the database and makes it available for publishing.

From what we saw, P.Ink Press has become very comprehensive and covers most functions needed by newspapers. The sql 2.0 database runs either on the Sparc or RS/6000 under Unix or on a Mac. Along with the new modules, the system provides page planning, image management and opi service, plus a nice facility for generating sports tables.

P.Ink has had substantial success with its applications in Germany, Switzerland and Norway. It had its first successful North American installation at the Toronto (Canada) Sun, and we anticipate significant moves in the near future to expand its distribution network.

A use for Newton. P.Ink hosted an interesting demonstration using the Apple Newton in a newspaper publishing environment. The demonstration wasn't a commitment to make a product. What it showed was a Newton in a remote environment -- or a sales office -- used to check advertising bookings or to book rop advertising space. This was done with the pen accessing menus, not making use of Newton's handwriting recognition. It was an interesting concept, one that raises the possibility of linking a Newton to a cellular communications system of a similar size. We understand such a product will be introduced at Cebit by Siemens next year. There is obviously real potential for its use at newspapers.

Proenen and Partner emulates Atex

A new editorial system we hadn't seen before, called PPEdit, was shown by the German supplier Proenen and Partner. Initially sold through Atex's German subsidiary, it had been developed for Axel Springer's smaller newspapers. It was designed to be comparable to the Atex systems in use elsewhere within the Springer operation.

The system has the look and feel of an Atex system and conforms to its structure. Its editing facilities are similar, using modes, worklists and batch functions. PPEdit runs under dos, while certain other modules run under Windows. The system is written with an open published data structure to allow other systems to interact easily with it.

All commands operate from either pulldown menus or through configurable hot keys. The mode function controls styles, which are displayed as colors on the screen. The composition language is like an extended version of the Atex language. A soft preview, using ATM and TrueType, works with the composition language and displays images and text. Directory functions are excellent, such as changing immediately from a short to a long directory with a mouse click.

The system works on either a Unix or nt server. It usually requires a '486 pc under SCO Unix, but systems have been installed using an RS/6000.

The page planning system works with eps files, where every item has an eps viewfile associated with it for display. The system can find any item that fits in a defined space, and every item in a directory that conforms to a defined space selection will be loaded into a selection area. For planning an article, the normal procedure for creating space applies. An article header is added. If the article exists in the system, it is automatically attached to the header to fill the space. The system runs under dos, but will soon be available under Windows.

A further element of the system is PP PageView for production tracking. Since it generates XTags, PP PageView establishes a two-way link with the Atex Press2Go pagination system using Quark Xpress, allowing users both to track and to view pages. Each page is given a production time. An alarm appears if the page is overdue.

From what we saw, this is an excellent editorial and pagination system. The Atex structure, the company feels, will make the system suitable for smaller newspapers. The largest order to date called for a 70-seat system. We can see no reason why the system couldn't handle larger systems as well. When linked with Press2Go or another Xpress product to add interactive pagination, it may even be suitable for many Atex customers outside of Germany.

QED features METS, large lineup

With all the recent acquisitions made by IPA, QED showed more different systems in its booth than any other exhibitor at IFRA. These included the QED Q Systems, the former Mycro-Tek Freedom Series and the GBT Mentor products -- in addition to the Monotype line of output devices. We

concentrated on one completely new development -- the METS system from GBT Monotype Systems.

Since the acquisition of the Freedom product line (previously sold as Mycro-Tek), IPA has merged a number of the QED Q Systems elements with the Freedom Series to add functionality. These included products like Q-Gather for assembling elements. This may have rounded out the Freedom line, but we still found the product somewhat slow in operation. However, we plan to look at this in more detail in the future when IPA/QED has had more time to optimize system operation.

The Freedom products are targeted mainly at existing MycroComp users. QED plans to use them in conjunction with some components of the QED line.

METS. The new product was METS from the GBT division of Monotype Systems. Initially, it is aimed at the GB Techniques user base, adding full pagination and edition tracking. METS follows the approach we have seen from some other suppliers recently. It provides a full pagination workstation on a '486 pc that brings together Quark Xpress and Microsoft Word, with a specific document management facility linked to a Novell Btrieve version 6 sql-compliant database. METS is, in fact, a completely new editorial system, and in the future it will connect to the existing Mentor system. Mentor will be used as a text entry system for METS, rather than as a full, two-way system element of METS.

The user interface, somewhat different from other systems, looks more like a book with tabs for turning pages to move between different sections or directories. The database is a hierarchy of objects that are viewed graphically. The system allows users to drag and drop objects onto another user's icon to handle workflow. If an object (which could be a user, page, story, edition, desk, in tray, out tray, etc.) has to be altered, the user selects the edit option. Any user with the appropriate rights can change any item.

The drag-and-drop approach is readily apparent with Xpress. A user creates a layout using Xpress for dummyming. The text object of the required copy is then dragged from the file system in the appropriate desk and dropped onto the layout. Story elements, such as the headline and text, will automatically flow into the correct boxes. Similarly, entire pages or editions can be opened just by dragging them from METS into Xpress. For multiple pages, a METS Xtension splits files into single Xpress pages.

What we saw of METS looked very good, but there is still significant work to be done to make it a full system. It was by no means as complete in its functionality or integration as Dewar's system, for example, which is similar in concept. The tracking aspects using the Btrieve database are still to be completed.

On the plus side, there already is a good Xtension to the Monotype MGS3 graphics database and opi server. It provides the user with a **thumbnail** view of **images** in the specific database folders and then autoloads the viewfile image into the defined picture box on the Xpress page.

Sinedita adds WYSIWYG for writers

The major enhancement at Sinedita is the addition of wysiwyg at the writer/journalist station. Previously, this was a nonissue because of union restrictions in Italy. The implementation of a split-screen interface for editor, layout, type formatter and Quark Xpress makes it a natural to replace more than 30 Hastech systems in Italy. Like most systems that need some cleaning up at the user-interface level, the two-terminal approach is a little raw at this point, but it has strong potential for type formatting. For example, formatting is based on style libraries, and the system makes the related styles very easy to get at.

Sinedita has also used its Xtension for paginating classified pages, opening it up to the directory market for handling telephone and hotel directory pages. While this particular setup appeared slower than others (at about a minute per page vs. others at a few seconds per page), a primary advantage is that it can handle existing database systems using a sophisticated import filter to massage the data. The liner ads are placed into the page one at a time, much like the Toronto Star classified pagination product from many years ago.

During the past year, Daipo, a strong Xtension product for automatically producing catalog pages directly from a database, has been moved to Windows. Between both versions, more than 50 copies were sold last year.

SII opens a new book -- to chapter 11

Could a System Integrators press conference announcing two orders from small dailies in the U.S. draw a crowd in Amsterdam? It never hurts to try. But, in reality, the new tactic was a very thin veil to gather the press together for rumor control. As reported earlier (see Vol. 23, No. 3), SII had chosen to take a proactive position and try to renegotiate the terms of its debt with its four senior creditors. System Integrators Europe Ltd. probably felt it was important to explain the dramatic differences between the Chapter 11 in the U.S. and "receivership" prominent internationally. It also couldn't help pointing out that the international subsidiaries of SII are separate legal and operating entities.

Given this was the first newspaper event since the Chapter 11 filing, we were particularly interested in the tone of discussion on the show floor. Most were skeptical. First, why would the banks give in to SII's demands, setting a dangerous precedent for all of their customers? Second, even if terms better than a fairly reasonable 1.5% above the prime rate are negotiated, is this financial gain worth the trauma of the filing?

Beyond the financial issue, SII used IFRA for a European version of Nexpo '93 last June. The same basic products were on hand, in some cases just as before, while in others there were some enhancements.

Systepo shows impressive database

One of the best overall systems we saw at IFRA came from Systepo Sypress of Finland. This company is perhaps best known for its agreement with Atex, under which its ad system serves as the basis for the Atex Enterprise system. What we saw from Sypress, however, went far beyond just advertising systems, and the overall database-driven system is perhaps as complete as anything we have seen from any other company in the industry. There are a number of separate system modules linked to the same rdbms system.

The editorial modules include Editix, which handles editorial writing; Wirix, which provides communication to reporters and news agencies and links Editix to the outside world; and Sportix, which automatically generates sports tables. For ad booking and production (the software elements used by Atex), there is Adix, for booking rop ad space; Creatix, for making up classified and semi-display ads; Linix, for booking classified ads; Logix, for storing and retrieving graphics and logos (this can also be used with the editorial system); and Voicix, which provides automatic telephone receipt of ads using voice recognition technology.

For marketing and sales support, there is Plannix, for ad sales planning and monitoring; Contix, for selling ad space, calling customers and making sales proposals; and Reportix, for access to reports and graphics. In the business area, Cobix provides invoicing for ads; Nedix allocates space in the planning of a newspaper; and Classix handles classified pagination. Circulation is handled by Cirix.

In market presence, all Sypress installations have been limited to Scandinavia, apart from those where the company is working with Atex in Italy and New Zealand. There is also what may be termed a mixed Sypress/Atex system being installed at Dagens Nyheter in Stockholm, where a 130-workstation advertising system is being installed.

With such a range of products, it is impossible in the time scale of IFRA to do more than take a quick view of the overall systems. What we saw was a very well-defined and structured system. The database is either Oracle or Sybase running on a high-end pc, Sun Sparc or IBM RS/6000 workstation. Clients are all working on pcs under Windows. In the editorial system, the user has a choice of editors, including Word and Sypress's own editor. There are windows for typographic commands, previews, available tools and user-defined catalogs (directories) with a choice of fields. A user can set either visual or audible alarms on any basket to sound when copy arrives in a basket. Editorial pagination works in either layout- or copy-driven mode. Copy-driven work is done through Quark Xpress for

Windows.

Prodix. The main new product, Prodix, provides planning, scheduling and monitoring for the production process. We had seen an early version at another conference and found it impressive.

The system shows a specified number of pages on the screen and uses color to indicate the status of different elements. Users can check the allocation of available resources through links to the editorial budget, which can also look at staff availability, existing workloads and shift patterns. This permits a planner to assess the resources available for work on an article. A tracker or manager can look at the production schedule from various angles, including on the basis of section staff, costs and time.

Activities can be created, allocated and scheduled from within the application.

We see a real benefit to having a single database for all activities, which provides a good opportunity for an effective tracking system, rather than having a "bolt on" tracking product that cannot gain easy access to the overall resources of a newspaper. Prodix is being tested at the pilot installation.

Trurofield broadens scope to ads

Another company working tightly with Digital as it tries to establish itself as a major player in the European newspaper market is the UK supplier Trurofield. We haven't covered it before because its role was limited to newspaper circulation and business systems. However, it has broadened its thrust to encompass text and image archiving as well as advertising, so we took a greater interest at IFRA. Its database facilities also provide some interesting aspects.

Trurofield introduced an overall newspaper advertisement, circulation, sales and business system called Matrix. It is a full relational database management system running on an Ingres database using a DEC Alpha AXP server. Clients to the server run on pcs under Windows.

Matrix is designed to provide a single-source database for all the advertising, circulation, sales and business activities of a newspaper. The system is broken into separate parts, each with specific functionality. * Matrix Newstrade covers circulation sales, agent accounts, sales to casual advertisers, dispatch control and bulk copy invoicing. * Matrix Direct handles subscription sales, direct delivery, free distribution and distributor wages. * Matrix Letterbox handles leaflet and insert sales, leaflet invoicing and purchase order processing. * Matrix Marketing works in readership analysis, advertiser analysis, campaign management, online canvassing, readers' offers and research consolidation. * Matrix Librarian offers text and image archiving as well as search and free-text retrieval. * Matrix Financials handles various ledger processing.

Advertising. The part of the system that takes Trurofield into new areas is Matrix Advertising. This handles classified telesales, space order entry, online canvassing and advertiser invoicing.

The addition of advertising capabilities enables Trurofield to move into areas that previously few commercial newspaper system suppliers have handled, particularly the booking of classified and rop advertising. Trurofield recognizes that in order for newspapers to leverage their expertise and customer access, they need access to different kinds of information from a single source. Previously, Trurofield's system linked to a number of newspaper systems, and now it will be competing with them.

Trurofield, Wilsthorpe Rd., Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 3LL, UK; phone {44} (60) 273 5900, fax {44} (60) 273 6605.

Unisys Hermes: versatile but closed

We recall being greatly impressed by Unisys at last year's IFRA show, so we looked forward to seeing its Hermes system this time. Unisys has maintained a strong following with newspapers in its Italian operation, where the system was originally developed.

Hermes is a full client/server application that uses Sparcstation file servers running the Sybase rdbms with '486 pcs running under Windows as clients. Using Proteus workstations by Unisys, all applications have full wysiwyg functionality. The editorial system allows for both layout- and

copy-driven pagination, and also has full page management and tracking. The system doesn't support standard applications for editing and pagination. All applications are developed by Unisys.

Refit. Enhancements since last year simplify operations. One of the nicest facilities is a refit function, which may be unique in the newspaper industry, although commercial composition systems have had this type of product for years. Refit uses try tables to fit text into a defined space. User-configurable tables specify how space and character-fit settings can be adjusted automatically to make a block of text fit a particular space.

If the text overflows the space, the refit function attempts to fit the text into the space according to the tables. This may include reduction of leading or space between paragraphs, around headings and introductions and under illustrations. It can also make minor changes in intercharacter space and character set width.

The refit then does its best to fit the article exactly to the space without any editing. Further, the outlines of the boxes into which text is flowed are displayed in different colors to show text status based on overset or underset conditions, and so on. The refit function works for both over- and underset text.

Image handling. The page makeup application includes facilities for adjusting tonal curves and applying rotation and mirroring to images. Tonal curves for various print processes can be prestored. One other nice facility allows the user to pick up the page geometry and drop it onto an image. This allows the image to be cropped or scaled to fit the defined space. A resolution alarm will advise the user if the scaling chosen will cause a printing problem.

A new feature for creating tables operates like a spreadsheet. Cells can be joined to build straddles, and typography can be applied to each cell. Cells can grow to conform to the amount of copy as it is added, or be scaled automatically to fit a given amount of text. Columns can also be balanced.

Color, including vignettes, can be used in cells or groups of cells. The table program can import any tab-delimited text file, but it doesn't support computational functions that are standard parts of spreadsheets. Aside from this, the table module compares in functionality to the table facilities available in a number of quality composition systems.

The page makeup system is an advanced wysiwyg application for Windows that easily could compete with mass market applications such as Xpress or PageMaker. Its functionality appeared at least as good, and the user interface is excellent. It would be interesting to see Unisys try to compete in this market, although we understand there are no plans to do so. (We also know how hard it is for any product, no matter how good, to crack the market that has been dominated for so long by two products.)

Another new component is the advertising system, which operates in a client/server mode using the same tools as the editorial system. It appears to be well structured and designed to work with remote booking from sales agencies or with direct booking from a newspaper's staff.

One other new system we saw was the Image Archive, which can work from either Sybase or Basis Plus. High-resolution images are stored off- or online on optical discs, with the low-resolution files on magnetic disks. The system archives text, graphics and pages, which can be accessed using a standard Windows client. Initially, text and graphics can be retrieved, but the plan is to add access to pages early in 1994 through the use of the Adobe pdf format for storing page images.

Unisys is selling the system outside Italy. It will shortly announce a large order in France at Voix du Nord in Lille. This, we were told, will require 500 workstations for editorial and production applications. The system will run on twin SparcCentre 1000 servers. The order, at the letter-of-intent stage, follows the success of a pilot site owned by the same newspaper group in Calais. Plans are to sell the system also through other Unisys sales organizations in Europe.

Van Gennep adds hyphenation Xtension

Van Gennep has filled the need for a real-time hyphenation program to replace the single-level quality, English-oriented Quark Xpress hyphenation

with a Quark Xtension called DihyphXt. It has done it with Dieckmann hyphenation, used for more than 20 years in various typesetting and composition programs. It's needed because Xpress doesn't attempt to deal with the nuances of hyphenation of languages besides English.

The Dieckmann algorithm will be beneficial in handling many languages, especially German, because of its logical approach. German users of Xpress without this Xtension must handle the more complex hyphenation rules manually.

Another nice feature of DihyphXt is its Network Server. It automatically maintains multiple copies of DihyphXt on the network by updating the dictionaries and logic periodically. The Xtension starts at \$650 per station and drops to a few hundred dollars in large quantities. The Network Server is included.

Scoop ups quality, adds functions

We saw Wilkenson's Scoop program for the first time earlier this year at the Swedish Graphex Pre-Press '93 show, and then again at Seybold Paris. As we stated at the time, this is probably the first and only true, shrink-wrapped editorial system on the market; a user can purchase a configuration pack for one, five or 20 users. Quark Xpress and Aldus PageMaker are available for composition and pagination, running on a Mac. The Windows version will be shipped soon.

Version 2.0, shown at IFRA, features several significant enhancements to both the program's functionality and its quality. The directory structure is based on a folder hierarchy. In a typical situation, the main folder contains all the desks; the next level contains specific desks with all the contents allocated or routed to that desk (short directory); and the third folder contains the text of the article. When this last folder is opened, a fourth one appears with full information about the article, such as tracking, estimated depth, any associated pictures, deadlines, etc. It also shows access rights to the article.

When articles are moved from one area to another, a number of automatic functions can be initiated by the Scoop Manager software, such as backup, copies to other users, printouts, etc. In the future, there will also be version management of articles, which is being developed in association with the newspaper Expressen in Sweden.

There is also a new editor with styles, which can be the same as those in Xpress or PageMaker, or which can generate styles to be passed into Xpress or PageMaker. The new editor has a ruler function to give a reasonable assessment of composition. It also provides a wysiwyg view in a galley format, without hyphenation.

The editor has access to both spelling checking and a thesaurus. In addition, notes can be added to an article in text or voice form. Nonprinting marks can be added to text. The editor provides users with their own personal clipboards, in addition to the normal Macintosh clipboard. For sports editors, an additional program called Scoop Hat Trick builds and updates sports tables.

Another new feature of the program is Scoop Archive, an extension of the earlier Scoop searching facility that can now fully archive articles and pages. In the main Scoop program, full search functionality is restricted to a selected catalog. In Archive, articles from Xpress pages can be dropped into an archive folder. The Manager program indexes the full text of these articles, ideally as an overnight operation, and writes the text to disk. The index is maintained in ram, which limits Archive's suitability to small newspapers. However, we were told that 32 mb would be sufficient to hold three years' worth of indexes from one paper.

Scoop's pricing is very attractive, and, as stated before, it is sold in packs for one, five and 20 users. So, for example, a 45-user system would require two 20-packs and one five-pack. The single-user price is Pound sterling 650 (\$960) for the software, but a restricted version without access to Xpress or PageMaker is Pound sterling 390 (\$575). The customer supplies the hardware.

From what we have seen, this is a competitively priced, attractive editorial system targeted at smaller newspapers. On the Mac, the filing system is standard AppleShare. For Windows, any pc/Windows filing structure

can be used.

Although we say Scoop is best for smaller newspapers, this does not preclude its use in larger papers. We understand that Expressen in Sweden has an 80-user Scoop system linked to a large SII system. In this setup, the SII system acts as a sophisticated word processor and copy-routing system, which then passes copy into Scoop for making up pages.

Newspaper Systems at IPEX

IPEX is not a newspaper show, but there were a fair number of newspaper systems being demonstrated on the floor. Most of these were systems we have seen and reported on before.

Cascade shows ad tracking, Acrobat

Amid much more fanfare than real product, Richard Patterson's new firm, now called Cascade, demonstrated some of the work it is doing in developing an ad tracking database.

It unveiled a pc client for its Sybase database, but in the demonstrations the database was not actually linked to anything but itself. Without such links, it was difficult to ascertain what aspects of what were shown are going to be included in the Cascade product.

Acrobat. Cascade also demonstrated Adobe Acrobat, ostensibly to discuss its potential as an archiving solution. (The remote transmission idea floated at Nexpo in the APSI booth evidently has not turned out to be a popular one.) One of the customers Cascade is working with has its text in BasisPlus; Cascade hopes to put links in the text that will allow users to search the BasisPlus database and retrieve complete pages or documents for viewing. Unfortunately, Cascade, like most vars, is waiting for Adobe to complete the api that will make such archiving systems possible. It is not even clear whether these pdf links will be created by Cascade or IDI. At this point, the only archiving that Cascade could show was saving pdf pages, with no cross-file searching -- full-text or key word. About all we can say conclusively is that the technology is premature; stay tuned for further details.

Miles previews Vista

Miles previewed its Vista management reporting module for its telephone ad sales system, Canvass, which is now in the field. Vista takes files from a variety of formats, puts them into a standard database format (Microsoft's odbc), imports the data into a graphical reporting tool, such as Lotus Improv, and presents to the manager a graph or chart of sales activity. Miles hopes to have Vista ready for beta testing later this year. Its Beacon editorial system, which we covered at Newstec, is now undergoing beta testing.

PageSet shows newspaper programs

PageSet Systems, the distributors of the Magna batch pagination program, showed some new approaches to some old favorites. First, it showed the existing MagnaBook software running on a pc. Designed for structured, high-volume, batch pagination jobs, we took a look at the development of the product and its features earlier this year (see Vol. 22, No. 9, p. 16). MagnaBook is priced on a sliding scale according to the number of seats.

PageSet also introduced two programs derived from the PageComp software. For those unfamiliar with it, PageComp was Magna's general-purpose wysiwyg composition program for layout-driven documents, such as magazines. PageSet acquired the source code to the software in 1992. We saw how PageSet was using the product in real estate applications at Newstec (see Vol. 22, No. 16, p. 10). Since then, PageSet has divided the software into two programs: PageSetNews and PageSetAd, designed for newspaper editorial and advertising tasks respectively.

The programs feature the same basic functionality as PageComp but a few features useful for their target markets have been added. For example, PageSetAd has an array feature that allows for quick step-and-repeat creation of rows and columns of boxes, a useful tool for creating property ads. The user simply specifies the gutter size and the number of columns and rows. Also, the program can read in text with embedded picture calls. PageSetAd has a user using an Atex system who keys in the picture calls. The calls are grabbed on a Canon Visualizer with naming conventions that match the calls from the Atex system. When the text is imported into

PageSetNews, the pictures and text come in together, thus eliminating the need to create separate text and picture boxes and also helping to ensure the correct pictures are with the proper text. In addition, both programs also have the ability to run external programs without exiting PageSetNews or PageSetAd.

PageSetNews and PageSetAd integrate with other editorial and production systems, including Atex, CSI, Miles, SII and GBT. PageSet recently has added Dewar to the list to integrate PageSetNews with DewarView.

PageSetNews and PageSetAd are also priced on a sliding scale. Software for an eight-terminal system would cost about \$6,000 per seat. For those die-hard PageComp fans, PageSet will still be selling the PageComp software, under the name PageSetComp.

Pica still working on Ceres

IPEX '93 marked the return of a minor British composition vendor -- Pica Europa. Pica built its first newspaper system in the late 1970s. After that was sold to Dow Jones, the firm developed book, magazine and newspaper composition software for Ferranti minicomputers, eventually acquiring the CS7 software from Ferranti in 1989 (see Vol. 18, No. 18, p. 35). It now has an installed base of about 70 systems.

Three years ago at Drupa Pica announced, along with the CS8 upgrade, its intention to bring the functionality of its CS7 over to os/2 (see Vol. 19, No. 18, pp. 30-31). At the time, it demonstrated what one executive now characterizes as a cardboard cut-out.

Unfortunately, what was shown at IPEX (three years later) was not much farther along. Pica demonstrated its interactive composition product, the Ceres Professional Publishing System, but it was not interactive -- layout commands were entered into the text file; there was no interacting with a layout using the mouse.

Nor was the composition complete. Quite a few of the menus were merely placeholders for functions that still had to be written.

Pica was able to demonstrate the ability for multiple people to edit different stories at the same time on the page (it had no network, but did manage to get two sessions running on the demo pc), but without a database the system was completely lacking in any status, tracking or routing information.

Pica claimed that it is also planning a book pagination module, but it was not demonstrated.

IPEX was to be the unveiling of a nearly finished product, one the company claims is nearly ready for beta testing and is targeted for a spring release. But based on what was shown at IPEX, unless the pace of development accelerates quickly, such a time frame may be difficult for Pica to meet.

When it becomes available, the Ceres system will cost substantially less than the Ferranti Argus-based CS8. The Ceres composition software is Pound sterling 2,000 (\$3,000); the pagination module is expected to be around Pound sterling 2,500 (\$3,750).

Typetronics shows Xtensions

Typetronics, the Agfa distributor and Mac integrator, showed its library of newspaper Xtensions. We saw most of them at Newstec (see Vol. 22, No. 18), but a few new improvements were shown.

TTProperty, the Xtension designed to aid in the creation of real estate ads, now contains an ad resizing feature that automatically resizes the picture box if there is overflow text. Users are able to define (in percentages) the amount the picture can be resized and can also resize the text proportionally to ensure a proper fit if needed.

The key to the Xtension is that the overall area designated for the ad is not changed, thereby not altering the layout. The Xtension now also has a folder checking feature that checks that the text and picture folders are similarly named, thereby ensuring that the correct picture is with the correct text. If not, a warning box appears to alert the user. This is a handy feature, assuming of course, that you name the folders the same.

Typetronics also showed a beta version of TTServer. This Xtension is designed to be a work productivity tool that enables users to designate a

Mac as a dedicated print server.

Documents are placed into a predetermined folder and are then opened and checked to ensure that the appropriate fonts are present. If so, the file is sent to print.

While the idea of a Mac running as a dedicated print server could be a productivity boon, this Xtension, as it stands now, is lacking a few features that would really make it worthwhile. First, the user cannot adjust the **print order** in the queue, so a job with a higher priority cannot be moved up in the queue. Also if a file fails to print, the user is not notified. Instead the file is moved into a "rejected" folder and sits there until the user checks its status. Finally, the Xtension is designed to work with one folder of files and one **printer**, but Typetronics says it is hoping to make TTServer capable of supporting multiple folders.

No release date for TTServer has been set, but users can expect to pay anywhere between \$700-\$1,500.

Image Handling: Picture Desks, Transmitters, Etc.

The field of electronic imaging is exploding. Picture desks, portable **transmitters**, **image** databases -- they are all coming out of the woodwork. IFRA has always been a good show for this category of equipment, but the 1993 event took the cake. Whereas last year, when we reported new developments in electronic imaging from nine vendors, this year we found 15, which didn't include some companies that unveiled brand-new items at IPEX a month earlier or at Nexpo last June and didn't have an opportunity to come up with anything new so soon after.

Aside from the sheer number of competitors in this field, there were some interesting new developments. First, the Nikon Coolscan has taken the world by storm. In spite of its slow scanning speed, which gives it the odd distinction of being at once the most criticized and also the most demanded product in this area, the Coolscan is turning up everywhere. It serves as the basis of portable transmitters from mainstream vendors Hasselblad, the Associated Press, Tecnavia and, not surprisingly, Nikon, plus companies such as Sandia Imaging, which is making a big push in this market.

The Coolscan also featured prominently in larger systems, including a new bureau setup from AFP -- not yet a product, but being developed.

One interesting question about the Coolscan is why it still has the market to itself, a year after it moved into a dominant position. Because it is vulnerable in speed, we would think a competitor would have surfaced by now. When it does, we should be in for some excitement.

Not so definite is the choice of a light computer to go with the Coolscan in portable configurations. Both the Macintosh PowerBook and '486-based small computers were found in this role.

This year, we found that nearly everyone is supporting isdn -- not surprising in that image transmission is such a hot issue and speed is a crucial factor. But compared to a year ago, the situation has changed dramatically.

Other standards are falling into place as well. Support for the iptc header format and jpeg compression are virtually required for anyone expecting to be competitive. The dit 3.2 transmission protocol may be headed there as well, although at least one vendor is on a campaign to find a better one, insisting that dit 3.2 is really a proprietary development of Hasselblad's that a few other parties have gotten behind.

Of course, Photoshop is everywhere, although some vendors still provide their own image manipulation functions. In many cases, a vendor's own software is available, but additional functionality is offered by going into Photoshop. In a few cases, PhotoStyler is the choice because of the Windows platform.

Highlights. Besides the trends noted above, we call attention to the number of new vendors in this wrapup and some of the items they offer. These companies include: * Digital Collections of Germany with a nice system for storing and retrieving both text and **photos**. The DC System has a particularly nice link to Quark Xpress, which is in use at a German newspaper. * Microservice Informatique of France, which showed an **image** database as well as an editorial system mentioned earlier. * Telpress of Italy, which is moving into **image** handling from its straight-text

origins. * Tecnavia, which had not only a new portable **transmitter**, but continued its move to standard platforms and updated its software as well.

* Reuters, which decided to support an **image** database by tapping Phrasea II, a French development. * Inline of Germany, which has added a robust archival system to its earlier wirephoto service.

Not mentioned below is that PressLink has added the Reuters digital news photo archive to its available services in most of Europe. It contains more than 13,000 high-resolution, compressed digital files dating to August 1991, plus some historic photos from the Bettmann Archive collection. Also added is access to Dialog's full-text business, news, reference and government databases.

AFP: remote unit, preformatted pages

Agence France-Presse had no bombshell announcements or new products, but it is beginning to think about how to handle the need for a convenient means of digitizing photos quickly in the field. Its initial ideas differ considerably from the lightweight units incorporating laptop computers and Coolscan scanners being put together by several other companies.

AFP showed a prototype of its development. It was a standard Macintosh, a Kodak 2035 scanner (faster, but bigger, than a Coolscan), a modem, scanning software and Photoshop for **photo** editing. AFP's intended use of the system is in a remote, but fixed, location, rather than for reporters needing to carry a unit for **transmitting photos**. One of the requirements, AFP said, is to be able to scan and **transmit** concurrently.

AFP showed some nice features in its own software, such as a queuing system. To change the priority of an item in the queue, the operator drags that image to its desired place in the queue.

Preformatted pages. The other new idea from AFP was to supply subscribers with preformatted pages of items such as tv listings, racing results and stock market quotations. However, unlike AP, which sends final pages composed at the source in Quark Xpress, AFP intends to allow the page to be edited. It will send pages with boxes and text, in what might be called a preformatted state, but the page will be editable.

AP ready with PhotoLynx Pro

In our report from Nexpo, we covered Associated Press's development of a portable transmitter for reporters in the field. It comes in two versions: software only, called PhotoLynx S (called PhotoLink S at Nexpo), and bundled with hardware, called PhotoLynx Pro (PhotoLink Pro at Nexpo). The shipping date has slipped a little from its original September target, but AP now says first deliveries will take place in November.

PhotoLynx Pro comes in a nice package. AP has built its own custom docking station for a Macintosh PowerBook. In adding a couple of inches to the depth of the PowerBook (and still weighing only 15 pounds total), the docking station houses a modem, a single Coolscan scanner, a universal power supply, a 12-volt dc car adapter to run the unit off of a car cigarette lighter, a protective carrying case and compatibility with cellular telephones.

As an option, AP provides an internal battery package to power the scanner. The battery is supposed to last for 6-8 hours. A nice feature is that it will automatically discharge the PowerBook battery completely (a procedure recommended by Apple) before recharging it, thereby maximizing its next life.

The idea is that a reporter stuck off in a car out in the wilds can plug the unit into the cigarette lighter and transmit using a cellular phone. More to the point, the PhotoLynx Pro has a built-in expansion slot to accommodate a pcmcia interface to an electronic camera when it becomes available by the end of the year, AP says, making the remote car scenario even more attractive.

The whole setup can be done with other hardware, such as a different Mac or scanner. The most significant difference would be that such a configuration wouldn't weigh so little or fit in a small space. For a remote bureau, a larger monitor and faster scanner could be just what the doctor ordered.

Software. The image editing and management software offered with the Pro model is the same product sold as the PhotoLynx S. It is "virtually

the AP Leafdesk picture desk on a Mac," AP says, adding that the main things it lacks are some of the storage and connectivity capabilities of the Leafdesk.

We tried to compare the software with Hasselblad's Pixolo unit, but we were stymied to find that the PhotoLynx software being demonstrated wasn't the version to be included with initial shipments. So many of the key questions we asked received the same answer -- such features will be in the final release, but they weren't available for showing at IFRA.

In this category were some output management functions we find crucial -- queuing jobs for transmission, reprioritizing the queue to let an urgent **photo** be **transmitted** ahead of ones already in the queue, a log of system activity (to serve as a record of which **images** have been sent, among other things), etc., in addition to the ability to scan and **transmit** at the same time.

But there is another key difference between the competitive machines, besides the fact that Pixolo includes two scanners and PhotoLynx has only one. Pixolo, which runs under Windows, overlaps more processes. PhotoLynx Pro, which is restricted by the Macintosh operating system, can scan and **transmit** concurrently, but Pixolo can edit or **transmit** while scanning -- not to mention do a prescan on one Coolscan and a full scan on the other, all the while **transmitting** and editing other **images**.

Like most products in the market these days, PhotoLynx supports jpeg compression, dit 3.2 and X-modem transmission protocols, and the full iptc header. As if to respond to our original criticism of the Pixolo, AP has made it possible to save header templates with certain fields filled in to simplify entry by reporters.

Also in the software are hot keys for streamlining command entry, online balloon help and color correction using user-definable curves that can be stored for reuse. The screen can be set up to display any number of **images** at a time. Moving through the database is easy -- scrolling, paging, tabbing, etc. A contact sheet of thumbnails can be **transmitted** to the office, allowing an editor to pick the **photos** to be **transmitted** at full resolution.

PhotoLynx will support LocalTalk Remote Access, enabling a remote user to access the central database, mount a volume and dump data to the database. Alternatively, someone in the main office could call the remote site and access images without the reporter present.

If AP's image manipulation features aren't satisfactory, PhotoLynx lets the user jump into Photoshop and gain additional functionality.

Advanced Production Server. Also new in the booth was the AP Advanced Production Server for accelerating processor-intensive operations on the Leaf Picture Desk and for expanding connectivity options. It increases the number of gpib inputs and outputs by as many as 15, compresses and decompresses files six times faster than normal, and formats files for output six to ten times faster. It runs on a '486 under os/2 and is supplied as software only for \$4,500.

Allsport works on archival service

Allsport, the supplier of sports photos worldwide, is beta testing a system for archiving its library of six million images so they can be accessed by clients. It is using Leaf Preserver software, with a front end developed in cooperation with Leaf to enable client access. It won't be very different from standard Leaf products, but it will be user friendly as well as customized for Allsport.

The plan is to start with 20,000 images in the system from the six million photos in Allsport's possession. New ones are being added to the library at a rate of about 300 per day, we were told.

The project will be launched initially in the U.S., with Europe to follow next summer. In Europe, it will be structured around isdn communications. In the U.S., there will be a version for Switched 56 links.

Allsport has about 12,000 clients in Europe and more than 25,000 worldwide.

Crosfield previews Arkive in Europe

As it had done at Nexpo, Crosfield previewed the Arkive system for its Newsline picture wire service system, now scheduled to be delivered in

mid-1994. Arkive is a client/server system using Sparc-10 or Classic file servers with Macintosh or Windows clients. Crosfield's Solo system will be used as a client through a new Browser module. Current Crosfield 2640 customers will link into Arkive through a software upgrade and the addition of a tiff communication board.

Arkive automatically indexes data based upon iptc file headers for **digital wire images**. Analog **images** will require cataloging. There will be specific search sets based on naa or iptc definitions, covering header information for image size, resolution, whether an image has been published or not, plus ten user-customizable sets. Searches can be exact matches for single items, boolean or in native coding for the database engine. The system will come with Helios Ethershare for access by Macs, or through pc/nfs for pcs.

Digital Collections retrieves text/ images

One of the most interesting new products in the retrieval area was a text-and-picture database from Digital Collections Verlagsgesellschaft mbH (DC) of Germany. The system actually had been exhibited at IFRA a year ago, but it handled text only, so we didn't include it in our roundup of digital photography developments.

DC has been in existence for nearly three years, focusing in part on a cooperative arrangement with the Gruner+Jahr archive, a comprehensive collection of most materials published in German newspapers and magazines, plus a number of international publications. The DC System, as it is called, is being used with Die Woche, a weekly newspaper, which we will discuss momentarily.

In brief, the DC System supports online reception of wire service text and graphics; a full-text database encompassing stories, associated graphics and even pages laid out with Quark Xpress; a picture database handling tiff, eps, jpeg, jfiff and pict formats; remote access via telephone and isdn; and cd jukebox storage technology.

Retrieval features are comprehensive, supporting full-text queries, keywords, phonetic searches, synonym searches, linguistic analyses and context-sensitive searches.

The DC System is installed in eight sites (a ninth customer has since gone out of business), including three newspapers, a magazine, two radio stations, a journalists' training association and a tv production studio. (We'll mention the applications in more detail later.)

The database server software, which runs under Unix, has been ported to the RS/6000, Sparcstation, DEC Alpha, Macintosh under aux, NextStep and Unix on the pc. Client software runs on Macintosh, Windows and os/2 systems.

The database software uses proprietary technology developed by DC and called "reduced relationship entity database" (rred). It is a full-text, relational database that also accommodates photos, sound and, as noted above, made-up pages incorporating a variety of elements.

The system was developed on a Next computer using Display PostScript. Pages are stored in eps format.

DC offers two products: a standalone version and a plug-in for Quark Xpress, which is the one in use at Die Woche.

At IFRA, DC used a Siemens pc running NextStep with Macintosh clients to demonstrate the functionality. There were 50,000 items archived on the server disk in the booth, from which all demonstrations took place. Not surprisingly, searching was very quick. One search resulting in 5,000 hits took a few seconds. From that base we narrowed our query and got 16 hits, again in very little time.

Text searches. Search capabilities are comprehensive, covering the common boolean operators and proximity searches (near, in same paragraph, etc.), plus some more novel ones.

For example, a field-oriented search enables the operator to specify one field in the database that must be satisfied in searching for a text string or graphic. For example, specifying that the dateline to a news story must be Moscow restricts the search to stories with a Moscow dateline -- quite different from a boolean search that merely requires that Moscow appear in the story.

The phonetic search algorithm not only looks for letters that sound alike in one language, but it also accesses a lookup feature to find relevant spellings common to other European languages -- German, French, English, etc.

The synonym search employs a dictionary approach.

Digital Collections adds a nice twist to both the phonetic and synonym searches. After the search is conducted and the number of hits is reported, the operator can ask to see all items besides those stipulated in the original argument. For example, after a phonetic search for the name Ajaccio (the capital of Corsica and birthplace of Napoleon), the operator can initiate a second search for which the initial spelling is excluded, thereby locating all of the contrary cases where alternate spellings are used.

Searches involving compound words are handled efficiently, according to what Digital Collections told us. It works unlike many retrieval programs, where the speed of searching on the second word of a compound word is degraded because of the algorithm's need to look initially at the first word of the compound. In contrast, the DC System was set up to consider the second word directly, according to Digital Collections (we didn't test this scenario), so it takes about the same time as searching for a single word.

After a search is complete, the user can choose how to view the resulting hits -- as a title list or the first few lines of each item.

Photo searches. The DC System handles incoming wire photos using the standard iptc format, supporting storage, indexing and retrieval in the customary fashion. The user can customize the header in any way.

Full newspaper pages (or pages from other documents) are stored in what DC calls "fax format" in which they can be displayed in graphic format and read on the screen or printed out. If the actual text is available, it is stored separately and can be searched as a full-text database. In the latter case, the page or document can have a full header or a modified header.

The display and access to photos is similar to many systems. Low-resolution versions of photos are stored in the server database, with high-resolution versions stored on cd-rom discs on a jukebox.

Thumbnails are displayable in a variety of formats on the screen. Clicking on a **thumbnail image** brings up an information box that includes the caption and another thumbnail. All information in the box is searchable as text in the database. It is possible also to display a large view of the photo.

DC has implemented some nice conveniences for working with images on the screen. Thumbnails can be dragged and dropped to move them. If they are dropped on the pasteboard, they are then available for use in other applications, such as Xpress. They can be cropped on the screen to define a frame for use in a layout program. When a picture is associated with an article, bringing the article to the screen also brings a **thumbnail** view of the **image**.

Hyperlinks and multimedia. The DC System supports hyperlinks, which provide additional functionality such as displaying an actual page of a publication simply by double-clicking on it in the index. The database can include motion video in addition to photos and text.

At the show, DC was demonstrating pages of Die Woche with QuickTime movies behind the photos on the page. Double-clicking on the photo ran the movie.

Photo manipulation. The DC System has its own facilities for image manipulation, supporting functions such as rotation, mirroring and sharpening of monochrome images. Another available function is to discard the unused area that is cropped out of images to produce smaller files.

All work is done on low-resolution versions of the images, with the changes applied to the high-resolution version later. DC says it can perform about 95% of the work generally required in these situations. The rest can be done in a program such as Photoshop.

After images are edited, they can be routed to their next station by software in the DC System. Optional destinations include products such as

Linotype-Hell's LinoColor.

Page layout Xtension. Digital Collections has written a link to Xpress that enables a user in Xpress to access data from the database and for a user within the database to prepare items for use in Xpress. Photos can be dragged and dropped on the Xpress page. Using these capabilities, Digital Collections could provide an archive system for Quark Xpress documents.

We were impressed by the functionality, which is in use at Die Woche. This looks like a promising product -- one worth another, more detailed look when we have the opportunity.

Digital Collections Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Eiffestra* 422-424, 2000 Hamburg 26, Germany; phone {49} (40) 251 22 72, fax {49} (40) 251 41 21.

Hasselblad in lead with TwinScan laptop

Hasselblad, which announced its contender in the new laptop transmitter competition last spring and already has delivered the first products, looked every bit the part of a market leader at IFRA. Its booth was set up to feature the machine -- called the TwinScan -- and its demonstrations looked stable and comprehensive. In contrast to most of the other portable machines at IFRA, which varied in status from just off the drawing board to demonstrating unfinished software, TwinScan had the aura of readiness.

Sure, there were cries of overkill at the incorporation of two Coolscan scanners in one machine, but Hasselblad has demonstrated a good use for them: putting both into operation at the same time, such as prescanning an image on one while fully scanning another image on the other. In view of the fact that one of the most-frequently heard complaints at the show was the speed of the Coolscan, having two Coolscans in one TwinScan may help deal with the problem, although it obviously adds to the cost of the system.

The TwinScan can overlap other processes as well, such as manipulating or **transmitting images** while scanning takes place. We didn't run exact timing tests to see how much the speed of one task is affected by running another one concurrently, but a quick comparison of the time needed to scan an **image** once when no other scanning was taking place and again when the other scanner was occupied didn't show much difference. Hasselblad said it had run tests in which two **images** were being scanned and three were being **transmitted**, with only a slight speed impact.

TwinScan works in eight-bit mode, but from the 12 bits of data it receives from the Coolscan, it can be told which bits to use -- in other words, to enhance the highlights, shadows or midtones.

Features. The system has some nice features, including an **image log** that tells what has been done to each **image** (editing, scanning, **transmitting**, etc.) and a history log that reports similar information for the entire system (useful if you forget whether you actually sent a specific **image** or not).

Output queuing functions are convenient, with facilities for moving an urgent photo ahead of others already in the queue.

Because Pixolo runs as a Windows program, it can be minimized while running, so the operator can launch another program, such as a word processor. The entire instructions manual is available on the system as a help file. TwinScan supports industry standards, including the iptc story header fields, jpeg compression and dit 3 transmission protocols.

Among the things Hasselblad has added to the native Coolscan is a twain interface. Hasselblad also claims to have better drivers for Photoshop and PhotoStyler than Nikon.

Pricing and marketing. Incidentally, for readers who recalled the name Scancom describing the product in our report from Hasselblad's original announcement of the product (see Vol. 22, No. 18, pp. 21-24), there have been some changes in nomenclature. The complete package now is called TwinScan. The software for scanning, retouching, compression and transmission is called Pixolo.

TwinScan is available in two packages, one including a power supply and the other without one. It is offered as software only or bundled with hardware. The software is priced at DM 5,000 (\$3,100).

Hardware currently is offered on a list-price basis. Hasselblad hasn't

settled on final packaging for the hardware product, although it said that something like the prototype on display probably would cost about DM 1,000 (\$600).

TwinScan and Pixolo are in use in the field. A new software release in January will provide support for additional scanners and a feature to **send image** data automatically to a certain receiver.

Image Depot. Hasselblad also demonstrated its Image Depot production database and Image Retriever software. It runs on a Sun Sparcstation and can store up to 19,000 images, to be retained only for a matter of days or months, not forever. (For more details, see Vol. 22, No. 18, pp. 23-24.)

Hasselblad was demonstrating the JOB Systemintegration archival system in conjunction with Image Depot, but it emphasized that it hadn't made it a product yet. The focus was still on making it work in that environment.

Image Tuner. Hasselblad's Image Tuner photo manipulation program was demonstrated for the first time as a software product, rather than as hardware. Besides its use in image editing, it was given a new focus on newspaper production workflow.

Inline adds archival system

At Drupa in 1990, we stumbled across a company named Inline Softwaretechnik GmbH of Berlin, which had developed a wirephoto receiving system. Although we hadn't seen the company again since then, it has continued to grow slowly to the point where it now employs 20 people and has about 30 customers, located in Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

At IFRA, Inline unveiled a brand-new photo archival system based on optical disc jukeboxes, multiprocessing capabilities running under os/2, isdn communications, and proprietary software for data compression, image editing and handling the database. The system components can be connected locally via a local area network or remotely.

The system is configured around a central server that stores low-resolution versions of archived photos. The server, which is equipped with 64 mb of memory and a 4-6-gb hard disk, can accommodate up to 180,000 low-resolution photos.

Attached to the server via Ethernet or isdn communications is a jukebox of optical discs, each holding 4,000 compressed pictures. The system at the show held 32 discs for a total of 128,000 photos online, but the maximum number of pictures one server can support is 560,000. Beyond that, though, multiple servers can be linked to increase the capacity.

Searching. Inline has written software for searching the database and displaying the low-resolution photos accessed from the server. Any of the standard iptc header fields can be used in generating searches. When the high-resolution version is required, it is obtained from the jukebox.

The system at the show was extremely fast. It took less than a second per page to move through the database looking at low-resolution thumbnails and barely more than a second to call for the high-resolution version from the optical disc if the disc was already in place to be accessed, or 4-5 seconds if it had to be retrieved first.

Functions. Editing functions available using Inline's own software include cropping, sizing, manipulating color or gray values, and four-color separation. Alternatively, Photoshop can be used to perform further editing.

Although the system uses Inline's own database software, it can be connected to a standard database and extract the iptc data from photos.

By virtue of its multiprocessing operating system, the archive system can receive transmissions, crop and size **photos**, separate color **images** and **transmit** finished **photos** to a production system concurrently.

In the booth was an Autologic rip producing full pages with photos in place. Inline's role in producing the page included receiving text with picture calls, integrating photos on the page and outputting the page on film.

Offline storage. Photos that no longer need to be kept online can be copied to an archival optical disc and removed from the jukebox, freeing space for a new disc. Then, when a new disc is inserted into the jukebox, the low-resolution files associated with the photos on the new disc replace the ones for the removed disc on the server. However, the server retains

keywords associated with the removed photos, so if any of these photos are requested in a search, the server can still identify the name of the disc on which they reside. There won't be a low-resolution viewfile until the photo is brought back to the jukebox.

The system has facilities for purging photos from the database and backing up the system. Items can be marked for a batch operation such as deleting or displaying them as a group.

Inline Softwaretechnik GmbH, Goethestra*e 78, D-10623 Berlin, Germany; phone {49} (30) 315 91 50, fax {49} (30) 313 41 50.

Microservice image system debuts

A ten-year-old French company named Microservice Informatique made its first public appearance at this newspaper show with an interesting lineup of products, including systems for editorial applications and image management. The company, which employs more than 50 people, focuses on local area networks, database management systems, desktop publishing and multimedia.

Its image management system -- which is a working database, not an archival system -- is built around standard components, including jpeg, iptc headers, Photoshop, 4D and the French EasyTransfer program for decompression.

The system is designed to set up a database by scanning photos and to provide users at other sites, such as newspaper production facilities, with access to that database. A variety of scanners are supported, including the Coolscan. To aid in setting up the database, Microservice has simplified operations as much as possible by writing single-key macros for common functions and by automating operations such as compression, decompression, backup and purging the database of the oldest photos when the disk fills.

Both high- and low-resolution versions of photos are stored on the server disk, where they can be accessed locally or remotely.

Standard search features are available for local or remote access to photos in the database. They are displayed on a "contact sheet" of ten items, each with a number and a publication date. Contact sheets can be paged with a single keystroke. The contact sheet also provides a space to indicate the size and caption for whichever item is selected. Clicking on one item brings up a new display including the image preview and additional information -- resolution, type, comments, etc. Here, the user can type or edit the caption. Photos can be edited using Photoshop.

Microservice Informatique, Technopole Metz 2000, 17 rue Claude Chappe, 57070 Metz, France; phone {33} 87 75 85 85, fax {33} 87 75 85 80.

Nikon's hot product is Cool system

As we noted in the introduction, Nikon's portable Coolscan scanner is hot. In spite of its frustratingly slow speed, it is the scanner of choice when space and weight are serious concerns. It was found in many booths besides Nikon's, but in most of them, the idea was the same: how to configure a portable transmitter for reporters in the field.

Although Hasselblad and Associated Press have a good jump on the market in getting a product out, Nikon also has something on the drawing board to compete. Ironically, the plan just started to come together recently, in spite of the popularity of the Coolscan a year ago and the rapid moves by competitors to penetrate the market.

Coolsystem. Nikon hasn't settled on a name yet for its system, but the literature available at the show (mostly in German) made it clear that the company views its property as being pretty cool. According to the literature, the Coolsystem comes in a couple of models: a portable that fits nicely with a PowerBook in a Coolcase and a larger system based on a Macintosh Coolserver.

Some other components may be self-explanatory: Coolcom, Coolprefs and a Coollink. And if you have a problem with the system, call Coolcare. Unfortunately, we wish that scanning a slide didn't take a not-so-cool couple of minutes.

FrameNet software. One of the incentives for getting the Coolsystem together at the show was that Nikon came across a Dutch company called FrameNet BV that had developed software for scanning and **transmitting photos**.

The software was fast and easy to use, Nikon said, and it handled analog as well as digital photos. So, in spite of the software's rather mundane name -- PhotoDesk -- Nikon entered into discussions with FrameNet about incorporating it into the Coolsystem. Nikon is still evaluating it (functionality at the show was limited pretty much to editing captions) and hopes to have a decision by the end of the year.

PhotoDesk supports standard phone lines, isdn, local or wide-area networks and any other physical connection supported by the Apple Communications Toolbox. It also supports the CCITT AM120 analog standard for wirephotos.

Incoming pictures pop onto the screen in small size, and clicking on them brings up a full-size version. Manipulation capabilities available within PhotoDesk include cropping, deleting, renaming, moving and copying over a network -- not a very impressive summary. Nikon said it wanted to have a product with fewer functions than Photoshop. It appears to have succeeded.

The Coolsystem is designed to be open and convert data to cmyk format to send to a production system such as one from Linotype-Hell, Scitex or Crosfield.

The target price for the system is likely to be in the DM 20,000-25,000 range (\$12,300-15,400), Nikon said. Although that seems high, it is too early to judge it. We don't really know what it will do.

D-1 camera status. We inquired about the D-1 camera that was undergoing some market testing at Nexpo last June. Nikon said it still hadn't decided whether to make it a product.

Reuters shows text, picture system

Reuters's business is selling pictures and text, but to help its subscribers receive its offerings, it hired a French development company to produce a wire service receiving system. The company is called B&L Parentheses, of Lille, France. Its product, called Phrasea II, runs on a Macintosh and is referred to as a "multimedia information system" because it handles text, photos, motion video, sound and "any file type that can be saved to disk."

In contrast to Reuters's standard photo service, in which users download the entire database of new items, Phrasea II lets subscribers select images from the Reuters database and download only those that are more relevant. It also can be used to create a new database of photos, text and other items for access, archival, etc. Phrasea comes in two versions: one with full functionality for creating and managing a database, the other for serving as a client only to access files from the database.

Phrasea II was demonstrated in the Reuters booth. It was the first official showing by Reuters, although earlier versions have been in use for four years. (We covered a version at Nexpo in the Mac Solutions booth.)

It was demonstrated in two environments. One was local, receiving information by satellite and storing it on a local server. The other accessed a database in Paris over isdn lines. There was very little difference in response between the two.

Functions. Phrasea II handles acquisition of documents, generation of screen previews, indexing, storage, retrieval using full-text search facilities and export in a variety of formats. It was demonstrated accessing QuickTime movies from the database. The index and low-resolution preview files are stored in the database. Images are compressed using jpeg.

Photoshop plug-ins are used to drive a variety of scanners for image acquisition.

Phrasea can be customized to individual users' needs through Macintosh programming.

The product that is limited to use by a client is called Phrasea Agencies.

Searching is done over the full text in the database. A word can be selected from a displayed caption and dragged to the search field to retrieve other documents with the same word. Phrasea supports the common search functions, including boolean operators and searching by date.

Editing of photos is done using Photoshop or another program. Phrasea has no image manipulation functions of its own.

Xpress connection. Phrasea can be used as an archival system for the Quark Publishing Systems -- a shortcoming of the program that we noted in our recent review of QPS. Full-text searching can be initiated directly from Xpress.

User interface. Previews are displayed 12 to a screen, based on iptc conventions. Double-clicking on one preview enlarges it and displays the caption.

The user interface has a nice aspect that should appeal to most users. A portion of the screen is devoted to placing documents or photos for certain types of action. It includes a trash icon that can be used for removing photos by dragging and dropping them on the icon. A mailbox icon stores items to be accessed later. Multiple items can accumulate in the mailbox (or in the trash). When the operator wants to take further action on them, the items can be displayed individually in a vertical row. Selecting one item from the row brings it to the screen.

Programmers can build a new user interface through AppleEvents and scripting.

Distribution. Phrasea is distributed by the developers in France and Spain, but in the rest of the world it is handled by MacVonk, which is looking for a partner to help in the U.S.

The Phrasea 2 application costs about \$2,000. The client version costs \$750 per user, available initially for the Macintosh and soon for Windows. A database server can be added for \$1,500. A communications server for remote operation costs about \$1,000.

Sandia works on Windows, portable

At Nexpo, we noted that Sandia's new SnapShot picture desk looked archaic with its ms-dos user interface. At IFRA, we saw the beginning of an overhaul. Sandia has been working on a Windows 3.1 version, which will be followed by an nt product. The demonstration showed the use of a single monitor, but most of the key functionality hadn't been ported yet. It was promising, but too far from finished to serve as a true judge of the future. Sandia says it expects the nt version to be two to three times faster than the Windows product. The target is to have a product ready for release by the end of the year.

In the area of portable **transmitters**, Sandia similarly is in a state of transition. It has a product that works, using a Coolscan scanner and SnapShot **image** manipulation software. But the unit isn't really portable. We would call it transportable rather than portable. (see **photo**). Sandia says it is waiting for a laptop computer with high-quality video before it designs its portable unit.

Security aid. Sandia does have a real product in its SecuMind system, though. It uses a video camera and a dye-sublimation **printer** to print cmv data on plastic cards with or without magnetic strips. It is designed to be located at the site where it is needed, such as where people are registering for events. The machine is built in France. The software provides a nice user interface for designing the card's look, with menus for the operator to change the text field, the area for the photo, etc.

Each card costs about 50 cents and takes about 90 seconds to produce.

Sandia Imaging Systems, 3208 Commander Dr., Carrollton, TX 75006; phone (214) 407-6080, fax (214) 407-9085.

Schopf manages logos, images

Schopf Computersysteme of W*rzburg, Germany, demonstrated a pair of Windows programs aimed at helping to manage images and logos. One, called MediaBase, runs with an sql database (Oracle, Sybase and Gupta are recommended) on a Novell or Sun network. The other, called Watchman, is aimed at transferring time-consuming tasks to an external cpu to optimize efficiency.

MediaBase. MediaBase supports scanning or importing images into the database with keywords assigned to each one. Items can be organized hierarchically, such as by project (catalog, newspaper, etc.) or by customer. The system automatically generates low-resolution thumbnails for the screen, which are stored in the database, and puts the high-resolution versions wherever the operator chooses, such as a cd-rom.

The operator can search the database to retrieve items based on the

name, the number, the time scanned, the source or any keywords assigned to the images or logos, but not on all of the standard iptc header fields. **Thumbnail images** can be viewed six or 12 at a time, paging through the database. Photos are shown in full-color, 16-color or gray-scale format. Double-clicking on a **thumbnail** brings up information about that **image** or logo.

Image editing is done in programs such as Photoshop or PhotoStyler. Watchman. Watchman, which also runs under Windows 3.1, supports automatic processing of specific tasks by assigning them to external processors. For example, it can automatically replace low-resolution viewfiles with high-resolution **images** following opi conventions. It also runs **printing** operations.

As its name might suggest, Watchman monitors certain directories looking for tasks to implement.

The company and products. Schopf, making its first public appearance, is involved in other areas besides developing these products. It has a large catalog and book operation and produces a daily newspaper (Frankischen Landeszeitung in Ansbach) with a circulation of 55,000. Some of the product development was conducted specifically for its own work.

MediaBase pricing is based on the number of licensed users: DM 2,990 (\$1,850) for five users, DM 11,285 (\$6,970) for 20 users, DM 18,540 (\$11,440) for 50 users and DM 25,900 (\$16,000) for a site license. Watchman costs DM 6,000 (\$370) per computer.

Schopf also sells hardware.

Schopf Computersysteme, Friedenstra*e 63, D-97072, W*rzburg, Germany; phone {49} (931) 76078, fax {49} (931) 74625.

Tecnavia previews portable unit

Emphasizing its move last year toward open systems, Tecnavia demonstrated its picture desk, its archiving system and a new portable **transmitter** that uses the ubiquitous Nikon Coolscan slide scanner. Also new was **Photo Edit**, a software link for handling **photos** to be used with pagination systems.

Photo Dig "portable." Like most of its competitors, Tecnavia's **Photo Dig** portable isn't ready for field use yet, although the first test machine will be installed in Italy soon. It was shown packaged in an experimental case housing a Coolscan, a '486 pc with 16 mb of memory, and a card with a 68000 processor and 8 mb of memory. The 68000 compresses and **transmits** data to avoid slowing down the main cpu controlling the scanner. Like Sandia, the '486 isn't very portable, although it certainly is transportable. It doesn't use a laptop pc. Tecnavia says it wants a sturdier unit to withstand the rigors of field use. One benefit is extra slots for additional functions.

For image editing, **Photo Dig** eventually will support Tecnavia's full software, but it hasn't been integrated yet, so PhotoStyler was running at IFRA.

Other features include support for analog and digital transmission, isdn communications, jpeg compression, standard iptc headers, and some nice user conveniences, such as defaulting to the last phone number dialed and queuing photos for later transmission.

Photo Edit. Making its first showing, **Photo Edit** is an automatic link to pagination systems for processing **photos** using opi standards. In the booth, Crosfield and Unisys systems were **sending** page information to **Photo Edit**, where **photos** can be cropped, edited (by adjusting the histogram manually or selecting one of ten preset curves), flipped, negated, rotated 90 or 180 degrees, etc.

The screen reports the status on a page basis, including photos expected, arrived and processed. Errors are flagged, such as that there are too many photos on a page (more than were laid out).

The program, which runs under Windows, can be linked to any pagination system that can supply photo position information, Tecnavia says. It runs in the background.

Photo archive. The Electronic Photo Archiving System (EPAS) was demonstrated running under Windows (it had been under dos) with a magneto-optical system for storing high-resolution images. The database and

screen-resolution versions are stored on the main disk. EPAS supports a maximum of millions of photos, Tecnavia says.

Access can be local or from remote terminals. Isdn support is under development, but wasn't shown.

PFS picture desk. The picture desk, which made its transition to a standard pc last year, has now moved to standard networks -- Unix, Novell and AppleShare, using pc workstations. Tecnavia says it has maintained its fast system network access speed while using a standard network, although we didn't attempt to test that claim. Part of the speed is due to adding real-time compression using jpeg, which speeds browsing and selecting images. A compression board is installed in the pc.

The pc is a standard 50-mhz '486 without any acclerators. It also includes an input/output board for connecting to a network.

The software includes the same basic functionality as previously, such as displaying up to 72 thumbnails at one time.

The system comes in four versions: the standard one running on a network, a compact unit for standalone use, a fail-safe one for greater reliability and a modular one using proprietary hardware for specialized requirements.

Deliveries are scheduled to begin next month.

Telpress moves into image handling

Telpress Sud s.r.l. of Italy, which has been involved in news handling and telecommunications for 12 years, demonstrated a move into image storage and manipulation. Telpress offers a suite of products for press agencies and subscribers to generate, archive and manage text and images on the same workstation. The equipment on display was still under development, but it provided a good idea of the company's direction.

At the center is the D-Com multilingual system that can be used as an editorial system with word processing functions. It is based on '486 hardware and comes in varying configurations to support from eight to 32 input wires, from one to 24 output wires and up to eight workstations, with various gateways and lan servers to accommodate additional users.

We didn't spend much time with editorial functionality, except to access directories and stories, open a window for word processing and test the use of Arabic and English on the same line, which worked well. It supports both Macintoshes and pcs over local area networks or remote communications.

A program called Edicola is used for **transmitting** and receiving news and **photos** over switched lines.

Image handling. The newest development being exhibited was a system for handling multimedia files, called Image-Lab, with an Image-Desk workstation for editing images and an Image-Term station for receiving files (text and images) at a remote site.

The system, running in the Windows environment, generates low-resolution **thumbnail** representations of **images**, which can be selected to access the high-resolution version over isdn communications lines. In this way, as with most other systems, the user at a remote site can view a gallery of images and select only the desired ones.

At the Image-Desk workstation, the user can link photos to their respective stories, in which case the directory indicates that a photo is associated with a story name. PhotoStyler or another standard software package is used for image editing.

The system can be set up to suit the user's organization requirements, with up to 16 groups (e.g., sports) of up to 60 categories (e.g., soccer).

Using Image-Term, the operator can perform full-text searches of the database. Search criteria can be the date or keywords. Sets of keywords can be stored for reuse.

An online help system is under development, as is a Macintosh version of the system.

The company. Telpress has a manufacturing plant in Rieti, Italy; a development center in Verona, Italy; a sales and support office in Rome; a joint venture (Telpress UK Ltd.) in England; a distribution company (Holit Information Systems B.V.) in Rotterdam to serve Benelux and France; a distribution agreement with Dena GmbH in Germany; and close operations with

various news agencies in other countries.

Telpress sells both software and hardware.

Telpress Societa di Fabbricazione, Telpress Elettronica a r.l., Piazza della Liberta, 13, 00192 Rome, Italy; phone (39) (6) 3216304, fax (39) (6) 3216345.

Output Devices and Fax Systems

Computer-to-plate and short-run color printing had their time in the spotlight at IPEX, a show targeted at printers. IFRA, being oriented primarily toward the newspaper market, focused more on front-end systems and digital photography, although there were a few interesting developments among imagesetters and some attention paid to facsimile transmission issues.

We covered Crosfield's two new output devices in The Latest Word in our last issue -- the MagnaSetter 650 CTP for computer-to-plate output and the MagnaSetter 350 based on the Fuji ScanArt as a midrange imagesetter.

The rest of the developments are covered here, except for items that already were featured at IPEX. We refer readers to some really important items that fit in that category: * ECRM showed its ID36 drum recorder driven by a Harlequin rip, which we covered in Vol. 23, No. 1. ECRM also reported that IPEX was its best show in many years. It took 27 machines to the show, sold them all and took more than 15 additional orders. ECRM, which has brought out five new products in the last year, showed them all in a large booth. * Hyphen demonstrated its new rip implementation based on multiprocessing Sparcstations and a new approach to dividing input data among the available processors. Using a variation on display-list technology that Hyphen calls the "geometry list," the approach enables parts of pages to be distributed among more than one available processor. (See Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 25-26, for details.) * Linotype-Hell featured its Herkules drum imagesetter with a much larger image area (21.7"x29.6") than its earlier Linotronic 630, a much more versatile punching capability and some significant quality improvements.

Besides those items, there were some new developments. Of particular interest was a thrust into the newspaper market by Orbotech (formerly Optrotech), which not only demonstrated a version of its Sprint 120 external-drum imagesetter for newspaper applications, it also announced a \$1.3 million order from News International for imagesetters to produce the Times and its other papers.

Also notable were the arrival in force of the Oce Graphics G9000 thermal proof **printer** and the Information International 3850 recorder. A couple of scanner manufacturers -- Eskofot and Tecsa -- focused on scanning four-color separation films and their fax transmission systems.

The following exhibit rundown of remaining new stories is arranged in alphabetical order by company.

Agfa shows CLC driver, AccuSet 800

Agfa, which had one of the hits of IPEX -- its Chromapress digital **web** press, didn't bring it to IFRA. However, it used the same rip -- the new CR-A rip developed for the Chromapress -- to drive Canon's CLC 350 oem color copier/ **printer** engine for the first time publicly.

The system, which Agfa calls the XC315, comes in three configurations, differing mainly in memory (32, 64 and 128 mb), which determines their capacity for handling images. A 128-mb version can print A3-size contones at full eight-bit quality at full 400-dpi resolution. As a copier, it can scan an A3 page at full quality, while a 64-mb version can handle only an A4 image and a 32-mb machine can accommodate only an A5 page at full quality.

The XC315 supports both copying and printing functions, with Mac and pc drivers for the scanning unit when functioning as a copier.

The rip, which supports both EtherTalk and tcp/ip interfaces, has been optimized for speed. With multipage documents, it processes a second page while the first one is being printed. For black-and-white documents, it offers a fast mode to enhance printing speed.

The XC315 with 32 mb of memory was priced at 70,000 Dutch guilders at the show (about \$37,000), or 110,000 guilders for the 128-mb version (about \$58,000).

Agfa, which said a configuration using the CLC 500 will be available soon, has no plans to drive color copiers besides the Canon product line.

AccuSet 800. One of the "new" imagesetters making the rounds at the fall shows this year is Agfa's AccuSet 800. Not strictly new, it is a scaled-down AccuSet 1000 aimed at reaching a lower market. There are three key differences: it is half as fast as the 1000 (see table); its top resolution is 1,800 dpi (vs. 3,000 dpi on the 1000), and it lacks an automatic cutter.

We asked what was done to make the machine go slower, thinking that some money might be saved by economizing on components. We were told that the difference involved hardware and software, but we didn't find out exactly what was done.

AccuSet Buffer. Agfa also introduced a buffer system for the AccuSet when it is configured with an online processor. To prevent tension on the film that might result if the speed of the imagesetter and the speed of the processor aren't the same, Agfa has added a light-tight cabinet between them to allow a few feet of exposed film to accumulate briefly prior to being processed.

Agfa also unveiled a new film processor designed specifically for the AccuSet. It is called the Rapiflex 51.

CristalRaster screening. Making its formal debut was CristalRaster screening technology, version 2.0, which supports the Agfa HTA and Adobe PixelBurst screening accelerators, can be used on the same page as Agfa Balanced Screening, is backward compatible with all existing Star series products and images text at the recorder resolution.

Agfa says that the first version of CristalRaster technology is in use at 50 sites.

Rip news. The latest versions of Agfa's software rips were demonstrated, most notably a Cobra rip running on a Sparcstation-10/41. Agfa hasn't run formal tests yet, but it said there is a possibility the 10/41 version will be faster than the Star 600 hardware rip.

Also new was the Mac-based Viper running with a PixelBurst accelerator.

Agfa said that its testing has shown Level 2 routines to be running 40-45% faster than Level 1 routines.

Other news. Agfa showed version 4.0 of its cd-rom typeface package, which includes 500 more faces for a total of more than 2,000.

Also in the booth was the Lithostar direct-to-plate system based on a Gerber argon-ion laser imaging engine and Lithostar plates with run lengths of about 100,000.

AM scores with Escor II

AM International, the overseas distributor of Tegra-Varityper products, featured the latest version of its halftone screening technology, called Escor II. We mentioned it briefly at Nexpo, where it was previewed. And, because screening will be a focal point of our upcoming Special Report from Seybold San Francisco, we won't describe Escor II in detail here.

But, we'll note that it is an enhanced supercell-technology screening algorithm that produces more dot shapes and enables more accurate placement of dots than its standard screening technology. It changes the dot shape on the fly and adds inverted round and square shapes for handling negative output.

One of the results, the company says, is that higher screen frequencies can be produced at lower resolutions than through conventional screening. Moreover, we were told, because of its finer control over placement of dots, Escor II can be viewed as a step in the direction of frequency-modulated screening.

Escor II is already in use in the field with Emerald and some Series 3000 rips. In the U.S., though, the low-end Series 3000 rip doesn't support it.

Autologic shows NT, fax system

Autologic featured some products being shown for the first time in Europe, although they had appeared earlier at some American events: the APS-Fax system, the APS-6/108FC Lightning recorder, the 108-pica VR, and the Information International 3850 configured as an APS. One focus of the

exhibit was its use of nt as the operating system for its rips and its fax system.

For the APS-Fax, a new, low-end version was announced based on the Tecsa TS2050 flatbed scanner instead of the Eskofot 2540 S shown at Nexpo. Called the APS-Fax 2000, it is the same in other respects. Integration of the Tecsa unit into APS-Fax hasn't been completed, although Autologic has sold some Tecsa scanners for straight scanning operations.

New functions announced for the APS-Fax system include the ability to take rasterized pages from any Autologic rip, apply compression and transmit them without rescanning. Enabled through the PIP/In interface card in the APS-Fax, it supports the gicl format and Linotype-Hell's PressFax as well as PostScript data from hardware and software rips. One system can support a second PIP/In interface or a second scanner.

APS-Fax versions running under nt will begin deliveries on Nov. 1, Autologic said. (Dos versions are already in use.) The PIP/In card will be ready on March 1.

Rip issues. Autologic, which is fully behind nt as its rip operating system, showed both DEC Alpha and Intel Pentium versions of its SoftPIP. It hasn't decided which one to feature -- the Alpha is considerably faster, but Intel is likely to have the greater market share.

Partly because of the speed of the new processors -- and anticipated speed improvements even beyond them -- Autologic is holding off a decision on supporting hardware accelerators for color screening. Among the options are the Harlequin Harpoon and its own ASAP development. The Adobe PixelBurst also would be a possibility, although it is unlikely.

We asked about new screening technology, in view of the fervent activity under way at some competitive companies and were told there was nothing to announce yet.

Autologic also mentioned that it will begin beta testing soon on the next release of software for its APS-100 output system and opi server. It will include page pairing, improved optimization of film usage, and some other features.

Eskofot features fax system

Eskofot brought its new EskoFax system, which was en route to a German customer site. Based on an Eskoscan 2540 S scanner and a high-resolution recorder, it uses '486 pcs running software from Ion Publishing Systems for control and communications. If that sounds familiar, it may be because Autologic is supplying a similar system as its APS/Fax system, which was first shown at Nexpo in June. At that time, Autologic demonstrated a 2540 S scanner, Ion software and Autologic recorders, although the Ion connection hadn't been signed officially.

Eskofot demonstrated scanning black-and-white and four-color newspaper pages and sending them to an Information International 3850 recorder simulating a remote site. Pages with 43 mb of data were compressed according to CCITT Group IV standards, resulting in 3-mb files. Scanning and transmission took slightly more than two minutes, partly by overlapping processes.

In the EskoFax system, one '486 controls the scanner and compression. A second one handles database operations, page management and isdn communications. Then, on the receiving end, the setup is similar -- one pc receives the data and another decompresses it, rotates the page if needed and controls the recorder. The remote site can be set up to image pages automatically, to leave them in queues, and so on.

EskoFax supports the same convenient monitoring and status reporting functions as Ion Publishing's standard software.

EskoFax sells for DM 500,000-600,000 (\$310,000-\$373,000), including the '486 pcs and a 3850 recorder, although other recorders can be substituted. That price doesn't include some options for the scanner.

Eskofot also demonstrated its Esko DDS **digital** descreening software, which converts prescreened **images** to continuous tones through software, rather than merely using defocusing or unsharpening techniques. It works with screen rulings of up to 168 lines per inch at any angle and using any dot shape. It will be available on Sun, Mac and pc platforms for use with Eskofot scanners. After descreening, images can be rescreened, enlarged,

etc.

Eskofot, which won't exhibit at Seybold San Francisco, reported that it would cooperate with Archetype in its demonstration at Graph Expo in Chicago starting on Oct. 30. It will use Archetype's InterSep as an opi server, adding that to the Hyphen, CCI and Scitex support already offered. A key factor in that choice is that InterSep runs on a pc.

Eskofot also introduced a new version of its EskoSep color separation software for use with the 2540 rgb-cmyk scanner. It allows for better control over printing parameters such as ucr, gcr, black generation and dot gain, particularly as they relate to different types of presses.

EskoSep is available either integrated with Eskofot scanners or as a standalone package for the Macintosh, converting tiff-rgb to tiff-cmyk.

Finally, Eskofot disclosed that it is developing its own dcs-like format. We should hear more about it later.

Triple-I snaps to it with Sierra

Given that the Information International 3850 Color Imager is custom tailored for the North American newspaper industry, it needed to be "taken in" and "let out" various places for the European market. Surprisingly, Triple-I rolled out a snappy name for the new version -- the 3850/H Sierra Color Imager. However, just because it has a snappy new name doesn't necessarily mean that it will get a snappy story.

The "letting out" were the wider film size (19.6*) and higher resolution (2,540 lpi). However, the speed (24*/minute at 1,000 dpi), size and custom registration punch weren't compromised. Only a few modifications were needed to the optics to go to the new 18.3* image width. However, the machine's laser spot had to be "taken in" to 20 microns to improve the quality when moving from the lower 1,000 dpi for newspaper pages to the higher 2,540-dpi resolution for magazine work.

As Triple-I sees it, the markets for the Sierra are European newspapers, which generally require the wider film size for broadsheet newspapers and to produce four-up magazine pages; retail advertisers; newspaper supplements, which require slightly higher quality; and higher volume commercial applications.

Two machines are already in beta testing -- one at a commercial color service bureau and the other at a newspaper (our guess is in Germany). The machine will be available from Triple-I 60 days after receipt of order and through ECRM and its oem's after final testing and engineering are completed.

Other news. During the summer, Output Manager (obviously a pre-snappy-name product) passed rigorous beta testing at The Daily Racing Form. "Oman" (the Unix name) is a sophisticated opi software/multiplexor product designed to handle heavy PostScript volumes and sophisticated output requirements. The paper routinely handled peak volumes of 400 PostScript pages in two hours when producing its numerous editions.

Since Nexpo, Triple-I has consolidated Diadem and Camex operations under one roof in the Boston area and, not so coincidentally, the focus for both companies will be the same: the repetitive, higher-quality demands of the catalog and retail advertising markets.

Meanwhile, DigiFlex, the company's newest fraternity member, is going through beta testing of its own. Five retailers and 20 newspapers are participating in a test of direct-digital transfers of rop display ads to their many PostScript output systems. The benefits to the retailers are two-fold: later deadlines and less hassle.

DigiFlex will add value by acting as a "PostScript laundromat," taking in dirty PostScript files and providing clean output at the newspaper. Theoretically, retailer advertisers' only concerns will be printing to the DigiFlex terminal at its site. The challenge for DigiFlex is administering the many permutations of dialects of PostScript and output configurations at the various newspapers. For this effort, DigiFlex receives \$25 per ad, slightly more than twice the Federal Express costs.

Monotype adds punch, proofer

Monotype Systems focused on equipment in its booth, rather than its recent acquisition of H. Berthold AG of Berlin. We don't expect to hear much more about it until all of the papers are properly signed and there

has been enough time to sort out products and devise a strategy. For the estimated 5,000-7,000 Berthold customers in Europe, though, the acquisition should be encouraging news after a long spell of uncertainty -- and in view of the earlier, abortive alternative involving an unknown tax accountant.

As we noted in our section on systems, the Monotype booth brought together all of its various front-end systems and output products for the first time. At Nexpo, there had been three separate booths -- one each for output products, QED and Mycro-Tek systems.

News on the output front centered on adding a punch to the ExpressMaster 1200 for quality-oriented applications and filling out the company's line of Océ Graphics proofing devices.

The standard punch offering, which is available as a Pound sterling 6,500 (\$10,000) option in the UK, conforms to the Stoesser format. Customized punches are offered for Pound sterling 8,000 (\$12,200) in the UK.

The punch facility will help the ExpressMaster compete against machines such as the Information International 3850, which has a punch, and the AccuSet, which has done very well as a quality-oriented, capstan-technology imagesetter.

The punch is available now, factory installed on new machines or retrofitted on machines in the field.

ProofExpress. At recent shows, Monotype Systems has been bringing various Océ Graphics printers to serve as proofers. The latest addition, called ProofExpress, features four high-speed, large-format, monochrome devices based on thermal technology.

The differences are format (A0 and A1) and resolution (400 and 300 dpi). Monotype calls the four models the 3000, 3001, 4000 and 4001, where the first three digits indicate the resolution and the last one shows the size. The speed is 1.6* per second at 400 dpi.

They image on report-grade paper and archivable matte and opaque film supplied in rolls up to 328 feet long. Because they use thermal technology, they use no toner.

UK prices are Pound sterling 9,995 (\$15,000) and Pound sterling 10,995 (\$16,500) for the 24* width (300 and 400 dpi) and Pound sterling 14,995 (\$22,500) and Pound sterling 16,995 (\$25,500) for the 36* width (300 and 400 dpi).

Monotype also offers 11*x17* plain-paper proofers and color proofers from Océ and SuperMac.

Other news. Monotype didn't show the pc and Macintosh versions of its RipExpress CPSI software rip. Only the Sun Sparc version was available.

The latest addition to the high-resolution recorder lineup is the Tegra-Varityper 5300M, which records at 26.7*/minute at 900 dpi, 20*/minute at 1,200 dpi and 7.25*/minute at its top resolution of 3,048 dpi (it offers a total of ten resolutions). The machine, which Monotype calls the Eclipse, accommodates 13.3* photo material to support tabloid pages with crop marks and color bars.

The Eclipse recorder sells for Pound sterling 22,500 (\$34,200) in the UK.

Also on display was the latest version of the MGS3 color graphics management system, which includes improved functionality for managing job queues and software for pairing pages for outputting two-up sequences.

Océ features G9000 **printer**

Everyone else seemed to be showing the Océ Graphics G9000 thermal-technology **printer**, so it was appropriate for Océ to take a booth at the last minute and show it itself. We saw it in the booths of Hyphen, Monotype Systems and Orbotech, but it may have been in others as well. Harlequin has signed a deal to use it, and we expect to hear of other deals soon -- including two involving major players. It seems that everyone needs a large-format, monochrome proofer to match the large formats being handled by imagesetters these days.

The Océ unit is new to this industry, although it has been available for cad/cam use since May.

Océ has no plans to bundle the recorder with a rip. In all of the above cases, the marketing partner supplies the PostScript rip.

The machine on display outputs 36"-wide material up to 11 meters long at 400x400 dpi at a speed of 2"/second.

Oce quotes the cost per proof as 4 French francs (\$.80) for A1 size and 6 francs (\$1.20) for A0, no matter what the coverage is because the ink is built into the material.

Orbotech adds 120N, gets big order

With a new thrust in the newspaper market bolstered by a huge order from News International, Orbotech released its Sprint 120N drum imagesetter. It differs from the standard 120 primarily in supporting a punch on each side to accommodate two broadsheet pages. It also includes a cutter to divide the two pages after imaging. Special software enables double-page spreads with ads running across the two pages to be output in one piece.

Also new is a two-level user interface: one for ordinary users and another to give a newspaper's system manager access to functions not required by other users. For example, adjusting the machine for dot gain and changing negative output to positive aren't available to users at lower levels.

Like the standard Sprint 120, the 120N records at 1,270 and 2,540 dpi over an area 32"x40". It takes approximately two minutes to image a double-page spread, plus about two minutes to load and unload film.

Orbotech announced that it will offer an Oce Graphics monochrome **printer** as a system proofer. It **prints** at a resolution of 400 dpi within an **image** area of 31.5"x39.4" -- large enough to proof double-truck newspaper pages or eight A4 pages -- in less than two minutes.

Called the Sprint Proof, it can run as an integrated **printer** sharing the Sun-based rip of the imagesetter or with its own rip as a standalone **printer**.

Orbotech has opened an office in Les Ulis, France, headed by Jean-Claude Lacault and employing 11 support staff.

News International order. News International of the UK, which has been using one Sprint imagesetter on a trial basis, has ordered four more for its Wapping (London) and Liverpool operations. The value of the order is \$1.3 million. Delivery will be in a few weeks. Some of its pages will be rasterized in Wapping and transmitted to Liverpool for output on the Sprint units. Later, News International plans to set up a similar operation in Glasgow.

The London Times will be the first News International paper to be produced with the Orbotech imagesetters, with the Sun and News of the World to follow next. Today and the Sunday Times will be last.

Orbotech resulted from the merger last year of Optrotech and Orbot. Protec goes straight to plate

When it was said that "necessity is the mother of invention," platesetting probably wasn't the topic of conversation. But we can see the motivation behind the comprehensive production tool chest demonstrated by Protec. Besides the normal tracking and output control functions that are necessary to ensure that everything is ready to go to plate, Protec has also tackled the sticky problems of accomplishing this with a tabloid product. As thorough as these inventions are, we have to wonder about the lack of more industry standard applications, a standard database and the prominence of Unix and X/Motif.

The focus of this effort is the Digiplate 4000, a complete output system proven at 40 plates per hour. The system consists of a risc workstation, a Level 2 PostScript rip, MultiRIP PS, the Gerber direct-to-plate LE55 imager and optional plate processing and bending equipment. It includes an interesting combination of up to four '486 processors, a multiplexer and a Level 2 software rip from 5th Dimension to drive a single plotter. This seems like overkill for the workload of driving the LE55 at 1,016 dpi and 40 plates per hour.

Protec introduced Forma X, an application package that acts as the last stop for pages before platemaking. It performs output manager functions as well as imposition. After editions are planned, Forma X attempts to marry pages as they are sent for output. Once a marriage is made, the entire PostScript file is sent to the Digiplate 4000.

In making these marriages, Forma X needs to create even and odd folio pairs to run head to head on the press. This orientation is indicated on the screen with a turned corner at the head of the page. The software puts a nice, large header on the plate with all the proper press information to ensure proper handling in the pressroom.

To save material, the system can be programmed to hold pages to a certain deadline, letting later news updates catch up before wasting plate material.

Scitex features remote output

In addition to its color systems, Scitex emphasized its systems for communications and remote output. Among the developments was the move of its Ricoh Telepress communication system to handle remote typesetting in addition to page facsimile.

The approach used the new Scitex Edition Control Station, an interactive remote printing monitoring system that links the Monoscan SL broadsheet page and color scanner and the new Dolev 440F broadsheet facsimile recorder. It is driven by Scitex Telepress 15 or 25 controllers. The Dolev 440F can be configured as a Dolev 440 PS/M working in PostScript code.

Tecsa's AdLib eases gang scanning

Like many other companies, Tecsa has a strong link back to Xenotron, and one of its directors is Tim Coldwell. Several years ago, it introduced its broadsheet monochrome scanner, which was initially targeted at the page facsimile market. Recently, it has pursued a more specific application -- transmission of customer-supplied ads to remote advertising and printing sites.

At IFRA, Tecsa showed the latest version of its scanner, which not only has been improved to handle gang scanning, but is now a desktop unit rather than a floor cabinet one. The scanners, called the TS2050 and TS2070, were given new electronics, modified optics and a pin registration system, enabling them to scan four-color separations and handle higher resolutions. (See Vol. 22, No. 21, pp. 10-11, for more details.)

The two models differ only in that the TS2070 scans at up to 1,270 dpi and accommodates slightly smaller originals than the 1,050-dpi TS2050. Both can scan at resolutions as low as 300 dpi.

The 2050 is priced at Pound sterling 30,000 (\$45,600) in the UK. The 2070 costs Pound sterling 31,500 (\$47,900).

Tecsa introduced AdLib, a combination of software packages that assist in maintaining the scanner. The new software, which runs under Windows, enables gang scanning of ads. Ads are first scanned at a low resolution and then viewed on the pc's monitor where they are defined for splitting into separate ads and numbered. The high-resolution scan takes place with on-the-fly data compression to the pc's disk. The high-resolution version can be previewed and adjustments, such as rotation, can be applied. Using isdn or other communications, each ad can be sent to the receiving site where it decompressed and dispatched for output.

At IFRA, Tecsa was scanning ads and **sending** them to a Cybervision system in an adjacent booth for placement on pages. In its booth, Tecsa set up multiple pcs to divide the scanner control functions as well as data decompression, **image** management, spooling, opi functions, etc., which generally happen remotely.

When multiple ads are scanned in one pass, AdLib automatically locates the boundaries and "cuts" them into individual ads for transmission or placement directly in reserved spaces on pages. This feature is part of the software called Scannit.

Tecsa demonstrated a link between the scanner control pc and the database of space reservations for ads being scanned in the booth. Representations of ad space reservations were brought to the screen and the desired ads were neatly centered in the space. In cases where an ad didn't fit, it could be rescanned at a different size, anamorphically or proportionally.

For operations such as scanning multiple color separations, Tecsa demonstrated a nice feature for comparing the locations of data on multiple films. By viewing a scanned separation at pixel-level magnification and

noting the coordinate locations of certain pixels, the operator can compare the coordinates of the same item on multiple films, thus ensuring proper alignment on the scanner.

A key message being made by Tecsa is that it is offering more than just a scanner. Its product is a scanning system, incorporating control functions, queuing, remote operations and coordination with software for placing scanned illustrations on pages being laid out.

Tecsa has had some real success, particularly with newspapers that create ads centrally and then distribute them to other publishing sites. Among the users of this system are D.C. Thompson in Scotland, Dagens Nyheter in Sweden and WAZ in Germany.

Xitron adds Clipper Cadet (LBP-BX)

Like everyone else, Xitron has added the Canon LBP-BX **printer** to its output lineup. Xitron, which calls it the Clipper Cadet, runs it at 1,200x600 dpi on 11"x17" plain paper and sells the engine for \$4,200. It can be configured on a Xi-Bus, in which case it can share a rip with a high-resolution recorder, or with its own Navigator or Super Navigator rip. The Navigator costs \$14,700 including a pc. The Xi-Bus sells for \$2,500.

RELATED ARTICLE: IFRA's Rumors of the Day

Monday. The excitement over Charles Ying wearing a tie was dashed late in the day when it was discovered to be a clip-on.

Tuesday. Spirits were lifted when it was disclosed that System Integrators had negotiated the financial terms it had been seeking for two years, but the deal stalled suddenly when creditors wouldn't agree to take payment in rubles.

Wednesday. Word spread quickly that the disturbance in the red-light district the night before really wasn't British football fans at all, but instead was a Crosfield users' group meeting that got a little out-of-hand.

Thursday. It leaked out that the suggestion of a Pirate theme for the P.Ink party the night before had come from Scitex. Maybe a reflection of the ongoing negotiations between the two companies?

But the hottest rumor was: News flashed like lightning of an impending merger of QED and Harley Davidson, consolidating manufacturing of gasoline-powered imagesetters and laser-guided motorcycles into the old Monotype facilities. If nothing else, the new company "cars" will make it easier to hear the Monotype salesperson coming to town!

Other Topics: Hardware, Layout Aids, etc.

Ad-Star, formerly called Publishing Technologies, used IFRA for the European debut of its system for remote entry of classified and display advertising. It allows advertising agencies and direct advertisers to create their own ads and transmit them electronically into a publication's computer system.

For classified ads, the operator uses a fill-in-the-blanks procedure and is prompted whenever markup codes are required. With display ads, which can be made up using Xpress, PageMaker, Creator or some other programs, space reservations are made electronically and acknowledged with a receipt number used to track the ad through the newspaper's production process.

The latest news from the company is that it has opened an office in Brussels (to go with its New York and Los Angeles facilities), and it has four customers -- one French and three Flemish newspapers using one Datex and three Atex systems. The Belgian papers purchased both the classified and the display ad software. A common use is with automotive and death notices. Eps files are transmitted and placed right on the page.

Ad-Star said its newest and biggest market is the West Coast in the U.S., where the Los Angeles Times, the Orange County Register, the Los Angeles Daily News and the San Francisco Chronicle are the newest customers. We were told that there are now 1,000 advertiser sites in the U.S. able to transmit ads to member papers.

Codesco Xtensions aid page layout

As we have seen with some other companies, Codesco derives its income from multiple sources: as a distributor and developer of Xtensions in German-speaking countries, as an integrator of Quark Xpress-based systems, and as a reputable Xpress support group. The interesting part is that Codesco has developed these areas to the point where each contributes

equally to the company's resources.

As a testimonial to its six years of experience, Codesco discussed and demonstrated more than 350 Quark Xtensions for the Macintosh, more than 25 Photoshop plug-ins and 50 Xtensions for Xpress for Windows.

We had seen Codesco for the first time at Seybold Seminars in Boston last year, where it shared space in the XChange booth. Both companies exchange Xtensions. While we didn't have time to review all 350 Xtensions, we did look at some new ones.

The development group has created new Xtensions for generating rules and borders, for counting words and other elements of text blocks, and for smoothing the way toward efficient support calls.

Lines. Even the most sophisticated layout packages have had fits over decorative in-column rules and dingbats, so Codesco has made it very precise and simple to put rules exactly where you want them. The Lines Xtension provides options that include aligning to cap height, x-height, box height or box height with a specific indent. The depth has an equivalent method using the baseline depth, descender depth, indent depth or box depth. A powerful attribute is that these parameters are relative and scale along with the Xpress component.

Frames. The Frames Xtension allows you to specify different corner shapes (round, inverted, etc.) and different weights for each side of the border, as well as to change the relative positioning of the border to outside, inside or straddling the box.

Counting elements. The word counter includes hard-copy report generation, as well as more sophisticated counting techniques. It counts words, characters and even lines within a whole page block or a defined block. But what is unique is that it can include overflow text -- a strong feature for newspapers. The Galley Xtension is an on-screen tool to measure text in lines and characters.

Support. Codesco, a leading support organization for Quark Xpress, has a reputation for solving whatever problems are thrown in its direction. It has developed a 500-mb database as part of a bulletin board to be accessed by a user under a support contract. The support challenge today is different from the traditional days. Any Xpress user can pick up the phone and call with a question, regardless of the caller's technical knowledge.

To assist itself and the users, Codesco has developed an Xtension that electronically grabs as much information about the user's system configuration as it can. It fills in a form, asks for the user's name and tells how to get support -- such as by faxing the form directly to the support facility. It's a clever way to diffuse a potentially difficult situation and provide better service.

User group. Codesco is also spearheading an Xpress user group by holding a meeting November 15-16 in Koln. While the exhibitor area may be small, there will be many small workgroups to share high-level problems and solutions with the group. Hopefully, this will be the first of many user group meetings.

HP ready to fly with laptop

Hewlett-Packard is a serious threat to finally replacing the thousands of TRS 80 laptops used by field reporters. That is, when and if these iron horses of field reporting ever reach their demise. New laptop technology usually means sleeker and lighter units with longer battery lives. HP has made strides in all three areas. Its OmniBook Superportable pc is based on pcmcia technology (or memory cards for the technophobes), with a resulting 11*x6*x1* size and a weight of 2.8 pounds (1.3 kg.). The overall unit is so small that if the product name were completely spelled out in anything larger than 36-point type it probably wouldn't fit on the case.

However, the most important feature for any reporter is the power supply, and the OmniBook 300 offers a dramatic gain in battery life from five to ten hours.

But if you still run out of juice in the middle of that Pulitzer Prize-winning story, you can steal the aa batteries from your Sony Walkman and continue working. This battery life is based on the Model F1030A, which does not have a mass storage device. The Flash Memory sram card capacity is 10 mb (20 mb using data compression) per card, but probably isn't a

limitation for most field reporters. The addition of a 42-mb (80-mb when compressed) hard disk only adds.1 lb., but it cuts battery life to five hours.

Very prominent on the case is the Microsoft Windows logo, which HP points out, is Bill Gates's personal endorsement of the product. This also signifies that ms-dos 5.0, Windows 3.1, Word 2.0c and Excel 4.0 are included in rom. Also included are Traveling Software's LapLink Remote Access, an HP Organizer and a calculator.

Next to the Microsoft logo is a button with a mouse icon. Push it and a little mouse pops out of its "hole." While this was an interesting attempt to fit portables with a mouse, using this one may be a little tricky in the middle seat of a plane. Field reporters currently are getting by without a mouse, so this point may be moot.

Needed: a TRS lookalike? Exhibiting in the booth with HP was And Computer Solutions, which demonstrated a proprietary editor, Copymaster, designed for hard-core reporters who want simple commands to write, send and fetch stories -- a TRS lookalike. Hopefully, this will reduce phone charges incurred when reporters try to walk through other communication packages.

This makes sense, but we don't understand why it requires a proprietary editor. Given a choice of Word and Copymaster, we believe most reporters will begin to explore Word very quickly. A package deal was offered with the Copymaster software and the HP OmniBook, including the pcmcia modem but without the hard disk, for Pound sterling 1,499 (\$2,200).

IBM 4Cs 4P as a newspaper platform

As the major vendors toggle back and forth between focusing on new technology and emphasizing business partners, we found IBM on the technology side of the fence this year. This was the debut of the PowerPC. The PowerPC Publishing Platform (4P) now offers binary compatibility for an entire product line from palmtop to supercomputer. And, more importantly, it offers a brand-independent platform for all major operating systems. We saw the PowerPC running CCI editorial software under aix in an automatic demonstration mode. We also looked at the Pencomputer 710, the Thinkpad 750C and an energy-efficient PS/2 E.

As with all pdas, it is difficult to judge the merit for newspapers until more specific application software is available. The Thinkpad 750C, IBM's newest laptop, offered another attempt at a mouse for portable computing. A small red button was positioned in the center of the keyboard (between the g, h, b and n keys) as a kind of "micro-joystick." While it took a few minutes to get used to, the payoff may come when sitting in the middle seat on a long flight.

The PS/2 E is IBM's attempt to enlarge the technology haggling to include energy usage, which may or may not be successful in the newspaper industry.

IBM Italy demonstrated NEOS, a "glue" product much like DewarView and based on Word and PageMaker instead of Xpress. It has developed an Addition for PageMaker for workflow and tracking. An administrative package allows you to create the workflow with users and functions. The first installation was announced shortly before the show.

Sun showcases raw SX technology

As we have come to expect, the primary emphasis at Sun Microsystems was raw technology improvements. This year, we saw a short preview of a Sparcstation based on new SX technology. We saw a prototype demonstrating the advantages of this new-found speed with standard tools that rotated, cropped, sharpened and adjusted tonal values on a 6-mb image in real time.

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... as well.

Digital imaging. We were struck by how many vendors are now in the **digital** imaging business, some with portable **transmitters**, others with **image** archiving systems and, of course, many with picture desks. The competition for the lightweight **transmitters** for reporters in the field is heating up as vendors figure out the best way...to the Monotype MGS3 graphics database and opi server. It provides the user with a **thumbnail** view of **images** in the specific database folders and then autoloads the viewfile image into the defined picture...a few features that would really make it worthwhile. First, the user cannot adjust the **print order** in the queue, so a job with a higher priority cannot be moved up in...

...status. Finally, the Xtension is designed to work with one folder of files and one **printer**, but Typetronics says it is hoping to make TTServer capable of supporting multiple folders.

No...

...TTServer has been set, but users can expect to pay anywhere between \$700-\$1,500.

Image Handling: Picture Desks, Transmitters, Etc.

The field of electronic imaging is exploding. Picture desks, portable **transmitters**, **image** databases -- they are all coming out of the woodwork. IFRA has always been a good...Digital Collections of Germany with a nice system for storing and retrieving both text and **photos**. The DC System has a particularly nice link to Quark Xpress, which is in use at a German newspaper. * Microservice Informatique of France, which showed an **image** database as well as an editorial system mentioned earlier. * Telpress of Italy, which is moving into **image** handling from its straight-text origins. * Tecnavia, which had not only a new portable **transmitter**, but continued its move to standard platforms and updated its software as well. * Reuters, which decided to support an **image** database by tapping

Phrasea II, a French development. * Inline of Germany, which has added a...

...2035 scanner (faster, but bigger, than a Coolscan), a modem, scanning software and hotoshop for **photo** editing. AFP's intended use of the system is in a remote, but fixed, location, rather than for reporters needing to carry a unit for **transmitting photos**. One of the requirements, AFP said, is to be able to scan and **transmit** concurrently.

AFP showed some nice features in its own software, such as a queuing system...functions we find crucial -- queuing jobs for transmission, reprioritizing the queue to let an urgent **photo** be **transmitted** ahead of ones already in the queue, a log of system activity (to serve as a record of which **images** have been sent, among other things), etc., in addition to the ability to scan and **transmit** at the same time.

But there is another key difference between the competitive machines, besides...

...more processes. PhotoLynx Pro, which is restricted by the Macintosh operating system, can scan and **transmit** concurrently, but Pixolo can edit or **transmit** while scanning -- not to mention do a prescan on one Coolscan and a full scan on the other, all the while **transmitting** and editing other **images**.

Like most products in the market these days, PhotoLynx supports jpeg compression, dit 3.2...

...be stored for reuse. The screen can be set up to display any number of **images** at a time. Moving through the database is easy -- scrolling, paging, tabbing, etc. A contact sheet of thumbnails can be **transmitted** to the office, allowing an editor to pick the **photos** to be **transmitted** at full resolution.

PhotoLynx will support LocalTalk Remote Access, enabling a remote user

to access...

...of a tiff communication board.

Arkive automatically indexes data based upon iptc file headers for **digital wire images**. Analog **images** will require cataloging. There will be specific search sets based on naa or iptc definitions...

...will come with Helios Ethershare for access by Macs, or through pc/nfs for pcs.

Digital Collections retrieves text/ **images**

One of the most interesting new products in the retrieval area was a text-and...jukebox.

Thumbnails are displayable in a variety of formats on the screen. Clicking on a **thumbnail image** brings up an information box that includes the caption and another thumbnail. All information in...

...picture is associated with an article, bringing the article to the screen also brings a **thumbnail view** of the **image**.

Hyperlinks and multimedia. The DC System supports hyperlinks, which provide additional functionality such as displaying...of the system.

The TwinScan can overlap other processes as well, such as manipulating or **transmitting images** while scanning takes place. We didn't run exact timing tests to see how much...

...running another one concurrently, but a quick comparison of the time needed to scan an **image** once when no other scanning was taking place and again when the other scanner was occupied didn't show much difference. Hasselblad said it had run tests in which two **images** were being scanned and three were being **transmitted**, with only a slight speed impact.

TwinScan works in eight-bit mode, but from the...

...enhance the highlights, shadows or midtones.

Features. The system has some nice features, including an **image log** that tells what has been done to each **image** (editing, scanning, **transmitting**, etc.) and a history log that reports similar information for the entire system (useful if you forget whether you actually sent a specific **image** or not).

Output queuing functions are convenient, with facilities for moving an urgent photo ahead...

...new software release in January will provide support for additional scanners and a feature to **send image** data automatically to a certain receiver.

Image Depot. Hasselblad also demonstrated its Image Depot production...virtue of its multiprocessing operating system, the archive system can receive transmissions, crop and size **photos**, separate color **images** and **transmit** finished **photos** to a production system concurrently.

In the booth was an Autologic rip producing full pages...came across a Dutch company called FrameNet BV that had developed software for scanning and **transmitting photos**.

The software was fast and easy to use, Nikon said, and it handled analog as...product ready for release by the end of the year.

In the area of portable **transmitters**, Sandia similarly is in a state of transition. It has a product that works, using a Coolscan scanner and SnapShot **image** manipulation software. But the unit isn't really portable. We would call it transportable rather than portable. (see **photo**). Sandia says it is waiting for a laptop computer with high-quality video before it...

...product in its SecuMind system, though. It uses a video camera and a dye-sublimation **printer** to print cmy data on plastic cards with or without magnetic strips. It is designed...

...to the images or logos, but not on all of the standard iptc header

fields. **Thumbnail images** can be viewed six or 12 at a time, paging through the database. Photos are shown in full-color, 16-color or gray-scale format. Double-clicking on a **thumbnail** brings up information about that **image** or logo.

Image editing is done in programs such as Photoshop or PhotoStyler. Watchman. Watchman, which also runs...

...to external processors. For example, it can automatically replace low-resolution viewfiles with high-resolution **images** following opi conventions. It also runs **printing** operations.

As its name might suggest, Watchman monitors certain directories looking for tasks to implement...

...toward open systems, Tecnavia demonstrated its picture desk, its archiving system and a new portable **transmitter** that uses the ubiquitous Nikon Coolscan slide scanner. Also new was **Photo Edit**, a software link for handling **photos** to be used with pagination systems.

Photo Dig "portable." Like most of its competitors, Tecnavia's **Photo Dig** portable isn't ready for field use yet, although the first test machine will...

...a card with a 68000 processor and 8 mb of memory. The 68000 compresses and **transmits** data to avoid slowing down the main cpu controlling the scanner. Like Sandia, the '486...

...such as defaulting to the last phone number dialed and queuing photos for later transmission.

Photo Edit. Making its first showing, **Photo Edit** is an automatic link to pagination systems for processing **photos** using opi standards. In the booth, Crosfield and Unisys systems were **sending** page information to **Photo Edit**, where **photos** can be cropped, edited (by adjusting the histogram manually or selecting one of ten preset...

...pcs over local area networks or remote communications.

A program called Edicola is used for **transmitting** and receiving news and **photos** over switched lines.

Image handling. The newest development being exhibited was a system for handling...

...images) at a remote site.

The system, running in the Windows environment, generates low-resolution **thumbnail** representations of **images**, which can be selected to access the high-resolution version over isdn communications lines. In...papers.

Also notable were the arrival in force of the Oce Graphics G9000 thermal proof **printer** and the Information International 3850 recorder. A couple of scanner manufacturers -- Eskofot and Tecsa -- focused...

...driver, AccuSet 800

Agfa, which had one of the hits of IPEX -- its Chromapress digital **web** press, didn't bring it to IFRA. However, it used the same rip -- the new...

...A rip developed for the Chromapress -- to drive Canon's CLC 350 oem color copier/ **printer** engine for the first time publicly.

The system, which Agfa calls the XC315, comes in...price doesn't include some options for the scanner.

Eskofot also demonstrated its Esko DDS **digital** descreening software, which converts prescreened **images** to continuous tones through software, rather than merely using defocusing or unsharpening techniques. It works... job queues and software for pairing pages for outputting two-up sequences.

Oce features G9000 **printer**

Everyone else seemed to be showing the Oce Graphics G9000 thermal-technology **printer**, so it was appropriate for Oce to take a booth at the last minute and...

...to load and unload film.

Orbotech announced that it will offer an Oce Graphics monochrome **printer** as a system proofer. It **prints** at a resolution of 400 dpi within an **image** area of 31.5"x39.4" -- large enough to proof double-truck newspaper pages or...

...in less than two minutes.

Called the Sprint Proof, it can run as an integrated **printer** sharing the Sun-based rip of the imagesetter or with its own rip as a standalone **printer**.

Orbotech has opened an office in Les Ulis, France, headed by Jean-Claude Lacault and...site where it decompressed and dispatched for output.

At IFRA, Tecsa was scanning ads and **sending** them to a Cybervision system in an adjacent booth for placement on pages. In its...

...set up multiple pcs to divide the scanner control functions as well as data decompression, **image** management, spooling, opi functions, etc., which generally happen remotely.

When multiple ads are scanned in...

...adds Clipper Cadet (LBP-BX)

Like everyone else, Xitron has added the Canon LBP-BX **printer** to its output lineup. Xitron, which calls it the Clipper Cadet, runs it at 1...